

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XIX.

MORNING made a considerable difference in my general prospect of Life, and brightened it so much that it scarcely seemed the same. What lay heaviest on my mind was the consideration that six days intervened between me and the day of departure; for, I could not divest myself of a misgiving that something might happen to London in the mean while, and that, when I got there, it would be either greatly deteriorated or clean gone.

Joe and Biddy were very sympathetic and pleasant when I spoke of our approaching separation; but they only referred to it when I did. After breakfast, Joe brought out my indentures from the press in the best parlour, and we put them in the fire, and I felt that I was free. With all the novelty of my emancipation on me, I went to church with Joe, and thought, perhaps the clergyman wouldn't have read that about the rich man and the kingdom of Heaven if he had known all.

After our early dinner I strolled out alone, purposing to finish off the marshes at once, and get them done with. As I passed the church, I felt (as I had felt during service in the morning) a sublime compassion for the poor creatures who were destined to go there, Sunday after Sunday, all their lives through, and to lie obscurely at last among the low green mounds. I promised myself that I would do something for them one of these days, and formed a plan in outline for bestowing a dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding, a pint of ale, and a gallon of condescension, upon everybody in the village.

If I had often thought before, with something allied to shame, of my companionship with the fugitive whom I had once seen limping among those graves, what were my thoughts on this Sunday, when the place recalled the wretch, ragged and shivering, with his felon iron and badge! My comfort was, that it happened a long time ago, and that he had doubtless been transported a long way off, and that he was dead to me, and might be veritably dead into the bargain.

No more low wet grounds, no more dykes and sluices, no more of these grazing cattle—though

they seemed, in their dull manner, to wear a more respectful air now, and to face round, in order that they might stare as long as possible at the possessor of such great expectations—farewell, monotonous acquaintances of my childhood, henceforth I was for London and greatness: not for smith's work in general and for you! I made my exultant way to the old Battery, and, lying down there to consider the question whether Miss Havisham intended me for Estella, fell asleep.

When I awoke, I was much surprised to find Joe sitting beside me, smoking his pipe. He greeted me with a cheerful smile on my opening my eyes, and said:

"As being the last time, Pip, I thought I'd foller."

"And Joe, I am very glad you did so."

"Thankee, Pip."

"You may be sure, dear Joe," I went on, after we had shaken hands, "that I shall never forget you."

"No no, Pip!" said Joe, in a comfortable tone, "I'm sure of that. Ay, ay, old chap! Bless you, it were only necessary to get it well round in a man's mind, to be certain on it. But it took a bit of time to get it well round, the change come so uncommon plump; didn't it?"

Somehow I was not best pleased with Joe's being so mightily secure of me. I should have liked him to have betrayed emotion, or to have said, "It does you credit, Pip," or something of that sort. Therefore, I made no remark on Joe's first head: merely saying as to his second that the tidings had indeed come suddenly, but that I had always wanted to be a gentleman, and had often and often speculated on what I would do if I were one.

"Have you though?" said Joe. "Astonishing!"

"It's a pity now, Joe," said I, "that you did not get on a little more, when we had our lessons here; isn't it?"

"Well, I don't know," returned Joe. "I'm so awful dull. I'm only master of my own trade. It were always a pity as I was so awful dull; but it's no more of a pity now, than it was—this day twelvemonth—don't you see?"

What I had meant was, that when I came into my property and was able to do something for Joe, it would have been much more agreeable if he had been better qualified for a rise in station. He was so perfectly innocent of my

meaning, however, that I thought I would mention it to Biddy in preference.

So, when we had walked home and had had tea, I took Biddy into our little garden by the side of the lane, and, after throwing out in a general way for the elevation of her spirits, that I should never forget her, said I had a favour to ask of her.

"And it is, Biddy," said I, "that you will not omit any opportunity of helping Joe on, a little."

"How helping him on?" asked Biddy, with a steady sort of glance.

"Well! Joe is a dear good fellow—in fact, I think he is the dearest fellow that ever lived—but he is rather backward in some things. For instance, Biddy, in his learning and his manners."

Although I was looking at Biddy as I spoke, and although she opened her eyes very wide when I had spoken, she did not look at me.

"Oh, his manners! Won't his manners do then?" asked Biddy, plucking a black currant leaf.

"My dear Biddy, they do very well here—"

"Oh! they *do* very well here?" interposed Biddy, looking closely at the leaf in her hand.

"Hear me out—but if I were to remove Joe into a higher sphere, as I shall hope to remove him when I fully come into my property, they would hardly do him justice."

"And don't you think he knows that?" asked Biddy.

It was such a very provoking question (for it had never in the most distant manner occurred to me), that I said, snappishly, "Biddy, what do you mean?"

Biddy having rubbed the leaf to pieces between her hands—and the smell of a black currant bush has ever since recalled to me that evening in the little garden by the side of the lane—said, "Have you never considered that he may be proud?"

"Proud!" I repeated, with disdainful emphasis.

"Oh! there are many kinds of pride," said Biddy, looking full at me and shaking her head; "pride is not all of one kind—"

"Well? What are you stopping for?" said I.

"Not all of one kind," resumed Biddy. "He may be too proud to let any one take him out of a place that he is competent to fill and fills well and with respect. To tell you the truth, I think he is: though it sounds bold in me to say so, for you must know him far better than I do."

"Now, Biddy," said I, "I am very sorry to see this in you. I did not expect to see this in you. You are envious, Biddy, and grudging. You are dissatisfied on account of my rise in fortune, and you can't help showing it."

"If you have the heart to think so," returned Biddy, "say so. Say so over and over again, if you have the heart to think so."

"If you have the heart to be so, you mean,

Biddy," said I, in a virtuous and superior tone; "don't put it off upon me. I am very sorry to see it, and it's a—it's a bad side of human nature. I did intend to ask you to use any little opportunities you might have after I was gone, of improving dear Joe. But after this, I ask you nothing. I am extremely sorry to see this in you, Biddy," I repeated. "It's a—it's a bad side of human nature."

"Whether you scold me or approve of me," returned poor Biddy, "you may equally depend upon my trying to do all that lies in my power, here, at all times. And whatever opinion you take away of me, shall make no difference in my remembrance of you. Yet a gentleman should not be unjust neither," said Biddy, turning away her head.

I again warmly repeated that it was a bad side of human nature (in which sentiment, waiving its application, I have since seen reason to think I was right), and I walked down the little path away from Biddy, and Biddy went into the house, and I went out at the garden gate and took a dejected stroll until supper-time; again feeling it very sorrowful and strange that this, the second night of my bright fortunes, should be as lonely and unsatisfactory as the first.

But morning once more brightened my view, and I extended my clemency to Biddy, and we dropped the subject. Putting on the best clothes I had, I went into town as early as I could hope to find the shops open, and presented myself before Mr. Trabb, the tailor: who was having his breakfast in the parlour behind his shop, and who did not think it worth his while to come out to me, but called me in to him.

"Well!" said Mr. Trabb, in a hail-fellow-well-met kind of way. "How are you, and what can I do for you?"

Mr. Trabb had sliced his hot roll into three feather beds, and was slipping butter in between the blankets, and covering it up. He was a prosperous old bachelor, and his open window looked into a prosperous little garden and orchard, and there was a prosperous iron safe let into the wall at the side of his fireplace, and I did not doubt that heaps of his prosperity were put away in it in bags.

"Mr. Trabb," said I, "it's an unpleasant thing to have to mention, because it looks like boasting; but I have come into a handsome property."

A change passed over Mr. Trabb. He forgot the butter in bed, got up from the bedside, and wiped his fingers on the tablecloth, exclaiming, "Lord bless my soul!"

"I am going up to my guardian in London," said I, casually drawing some guineas out of my pocket and looking at them; "and I want a fashionable suit of clothes to go in. I wish to pay for them," I added—otherwise I thought he might only pretend to make them, "with ready money."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Trabb, as he respectfully bent his body, opened his arms, and took the liberty of touching me on the outside of

each elbow, "don't hurt me by mentioning that. May I venture to congratulate you? Would you do me the favour of stepping into the shop?"

Mr. Trabb's boy was the most audacious boy in all that country-side. When I had entered he was sweeping the shop, and he had sweetened his labours by sweeping over me. He was still sweeping when I came out into the shop with Mr. Trabb, and he knocked the broom against all possible corners and obstacles, to express (as I understood it) equality with any blacksmith, alive or dead.

"Hold that noise," said Mr. Trabb, with the greatest sternness, "or I'll knock your head off! Do me the favour to be seated, sir. Now this," said Mr. Trabb, taking down a roll of cloth, and tiding it out in a flowing manner over the counter, preparatory to getting his hand under it to show the gloss, "is a very sweet article. I can recommend it for your purpose, sir, because it really is extra super. But you shall see some others. Give me Number Four, you!" (To the boy, and with a dreadfully severe stare: foreseeing the danger of that miscreant's brushing me with it, or making some other sign of familiarity.)

Mr. Trabb never removed his stern eye from the boy until he had deposited number four on the counter and was at a safe distance again. Then, he commanded him to bring number five and number eight. "And let me have none of your tricks here," said Mr. Trabb, "or you shall repent it, you young scoundrel, the longest day you have to live."

Mr. Trabb then bent over number four, and in a sort of deferential confidence recommended it to me as a light article for summer wear, an article much in vogue among the nobility and gentry, an article that it would ever be an honour to him to reflect upon a distinguished fellow-townsmen's (if he might claim me for a fellow-townsmen) having worn. "Are you bringing numbers five and eight, you vagabond," said Mr. Trabb to the boy after that, "or shall I kick you out of the shop and bring them myself?"

I selected the materials for a suit, with the assistance of Mr. Trabb's judgment, and re-entered the parlour to be measured. For, although Mr. Trabb had my measure already, and had previously been quite contented with it, he said apologetically that it "wouldn't do under existing circumstances, sir—wouldn't do at all." So, Mr. Trabb measured and calculated me, in the parlour, as if I were an estate and he the finest species of surveyor, and gave himself such a world of trouble that I felt that no suit of clothes could possibly remunerate him for his pains. When he had at last done and had appointed to send the articles to Mr. Pumblechook's on the Thursday evening, he said, with his hand upon the parlour lock, "I know, sir, that London gentlemen cannot be expected to patronise local work, as a rule: but if you would give me a turn now and then in the quality of a townsman, I should greatly esteem it. Good morning, sir; much obliged.—Door!"

The last word was flung at the boy, who had not the least notion what it meant. But I saw him collapse as his master rubbed me out with his hands, and my first decided experience of the stupendous power of money, was, that it had morally laid upon his back, Trabb's boy.

After this memorable event, I went to the hatter's, and the bootmaker's, and the hosier's, and felt rather like Mother Hubbard's dog whose outfit required the services of so many trades. I also went to the coach-office and took my place for seven o'clock on Saturday morning. It was not necessary to explain everywhere that I had come into a handsome property; but whenever I said anything to that effect, it followed that the officiating tradesman ceased to have his attention diverted through the window by the High-street, and concentrated his mind upon me. When I had ordered everything I wanted, I directed my steps towards Pumblechook's, and, as I approached that gentleman's place of business, I saw him standing at his door.

He was waiting for me with great impatience. He had been out early with the chaise-cart, and had called at the forge and heard the news. He had prepared a collation for me in the Barnwell parlour, and he too ordered his shopman to "come out of the gangway" as my sacred person passed.

"My dear friend," said Mr. Pumblechook, taking me by both hands, when he and I and the collation were alone, "I give you joy of your good fortune. Well deserved, well deserved!"

This was coming to the point, and I thought it a sensible way of expressing himself.

"To think," said Mr. Pumblechook, after snorting admiration at me for some moments, "that I should have been the humble instrument of leading up to this, is a proud reward."

I begged Mr. Pumblechook to remember that nothing was to be ever said or hinted, on that point.

"My dear young friend," said Mr. Pumblechook, "if you will allow me to call you so——"

I murmured "Certainly," and Mr. Pumblechook took me by both hands again, and communicated a movement to his waistcoat that had an emotional appearance, though it was rather low down, "My dear young friend, rely upon my doing my little all in your absence, by keeping the fact before the mind of Joseph.—Joseph!" said Mr. Pumblechook, in the way of a compassionate adjuration. "Joseph!! Joseph!!!" Thereupon he shook his head and tapped it, expressing his sense of deficiency in Joseph.

"But my dear young friend," said Mr. Pumblechook, "you must be hungry, you must be exhausted. Be seated. Here is a chicken had round from the Boar, here is a tongue had round from the Boar, here's one or two little things had round from the Boar, that I hope you may not despise. But do I," said Mr. Pumblechook, getting up again the moment after he had sat down, "see afore me, him as I ever sported with in his times of happy infancy? And may I—may I——?"

This May I meant, might he shake hands? I

consented, and he was fervent, and then sat down again.

"Here is wine," said Mr. Pumblechook. "Let us drink, Thanks to Fortune, and may she ever pick out her favourites with equal judgment! And yet I cannot," said Mr. Pumblechook, getting up again, "see afore me One—and likewise drink to One—without again expressing—May I—*may I*—?"

I said he might, and he shook hands with me again, and emptied his glass and turned it upside down. I did the same; and if I had turned myself upside down before drinking, the wine could not have gone more direct to my head.

Mr. Pumblechook helped me to the liver wing, and to the best slice of tongue (none of those out-of-the-way No Thoroughfares of Pork now), and took, comparatively speaking, no care of himself at all. "Ah! poultry, poultry! You little thought," said Mr. Pumblechook, apostrophising the fowl in the dish, "when you was a young fledgling, what was in store for you. You little thought you was to be refreshment beneath this humble roof for one as—Call it a weakness, if you will," said Mr. Pumblechook, getting up again, "but may I? *may I*—?"

It began to be unnecessary to repeat the form of saying he might, so he did it at once. How he ever did it so often without wounding himself with my knife, I don't know.

"And your sister," he resumed, after a little steady eating, "which had the honour of bringing you up by hand! It's a sad picter, to reflect that she's no longer equal to fully understanding the honour. May—"

I saw he was about to come at me again, and I stopped him.

"We'll drink her health," said I.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Pumblechook, leaning back in his chair, quite flaccid with admiration, "that's the way you know 'em, sir!" (I don't know who Sir was, but he certainly was not I, and there was no third person present); "that's the way you know the noble minded, sir! Ever forgiving and ever affable. It might," said the servile Pumblechook, putting down his untasted glass in a hurry and getting up again, "to a common person, have the appearance of repeating—but *may I*—?"

When he had done it, he resumed his seat and drank to my sister. "Let us never be blind," said Mr. Pumblechook, "to her faults of temper, but it is to be hoped she meant well."

At about this time I began to observe that he was getting flushed in the face; as to myself, I felt all face, steeped in wine and smarting.

I mentioned to Mr. Pumblechook that I wished to have my new clothes sent to his house, and he was ecstatic on my so distinguishing him. I mentioned my reason for desiring to avoid observation in the village, and he lauded it to the skies. There was nobody but himself, he intimated, worthy of my confidence, and—in short, might he? Then he asked me tenderly if I remembered our boyish games at sums, and how we had gone together to have me bound

apprentice, and, in effect, how he had ever been my favourite fancy and my chosen friend? If I had taken ten times as many glasses of wine as I had, I should have known that he never had stood in that relation towards me, and should in my heart of hearts have repudiated the idea. Yet for all that, I remember feeling convinced that I had been much mistaken in him, and that he was a sensible practical good-hearted prime fellow.

By degrees he fell to reposing such great confidence in me, as to ask my advice in reference to his own affairs. He mentioned that there was an opportunity for a great amalgamation and monopoly of the corn and seed trade on those premises, if enlarged, such as had never occurred before in that, or any other neighbourhood. What alone was wanting to the realisation of a vast fortune, he considered to be More Capital. Those were the two little words, more capital. Now it appeared to him (Pumblechook) that if that capital were got into the business through a sleeping partner, sir: which sleeping partner would have nothing to do but walk in, by self or deputy, whenever he pleased, and examine the books—and walk in twice a year and take his profits away in his pocket, to the tune of fifty per cent—it appeared to him that that might be an opening for a young gentleman of spirit combined with property, which would be worthy of his attention. But what did I think? He had great confidence in my opinion, and what did I think? I gave it as my opinion. "Wait a bit!" The united vastness and distinctness of this view so struck him, that he no longer asked if he might shake hands with me, but said he really must—and did.

We drank all the wine, and Mr. Pumblechook pledged himself over and over again to keep Joseph up to the mark (I don't know what mark), and to render me efficient and constant service (I don't know what service). He also made known to me for the first time in my life, and certainly after having kept his secret wonderfully well, that he had always said of me, "That boy is no common boy, and mark me, his fortun' will be no common fortun'." He said with a tearful smile that it was a singular thing to think of now, and I said so too. Finally, I went out into the air with a dim perception that there was something unwonted in the conduct of the sunshine, and found that I had slumberously got to the turnpike without having taken any account of the road.

There, I was roused by Mr. Pumblechook's hailing me. He was a long way down the sunny street, and was making expressive gestures for me to stop. I stopped, and he came up breathless.

"No, my dear friend," said he, when he had recovered wind for speech. "Not if I can help it. This occasion shall not entirely pass without that affability on your part.—May I, as an old friend and well-wisher? *May I*?"

We shook hands for the hundredth time at least, and he ordered a young carter out of my way with the greatest indignation. Then, he

blessed me and stood waving his hand to me until I had passed the crook in the road; and then I turned into a field and had a long nap under a hedge before I pursued my way home.

I had scant luggage to take with me to London, for little of the little I possessed was adapted to my new station. But I began packing that same afternoon, and wildly packed up things that I knew I should want next morning, in a fiction that there was not a moment to be lost.

So, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, passed, and on Friday morning I went to Mr. Pumblechook's, to put on my new clothes and pay my visit to Miss Havisham. Mr. Pumblechook's own room was given up to me to dress in, and was decorated with clean towels expressly for the event. My clothes were rather a disappointment, of course. Probably every new and eagerly expected garment ever put on since clothes came in, fell a trifle short of the wearer's expectation. But after I had had my new suit on, some half an hour, and had gone through an immensity of posturing with Mr. Pumblechook's very limited dressing-glass in the futile endeavour to see my legs, it seemed to fit me better. It being market morning at a neighbouring town some ten miles off, Mr. Pumblechook was not at home. I had not told him exactly when I meant to leave, and was not likely to shake hands with him again before departing. This was all as it should be, and I went out in my new array: fearfully ashamed of having to pass the shopman, and suspicious after all that I was at a personal disadvantage, something like Joe's in his Sunday suit.

I went circuitously to Miss Havisham's by all the back ways, and rang at the bell constrainedly, on account of the stiff long fingers of my gloves. Sarah Pocket came to the gate, and positively reeled back when she saw me so changed; her walnut-shell countenance likewise, turned from brown to green and yellow.

"You?" said she. "You, good gracious? What do you want?"

"I am going to London, Miss Pocket," said I, "and want to say good-by to Miss Havisham."

I was not expected, for she left me locked in the yard, while she went to ask if I were to be admitted. After a very short delay, she returned and took me up, staring at me all the way.

Miss Havisham was taking exercise in the room with the long spread table, leaning on her crutched stick. The room was lighted as of yore, and at the sound of our entrance, she stopped and turned. She was then just abreast of the rotted bride-cake.

"Don't go, Sarah," she said. "Well, Pip?"

"I start for London, Miss Havisham, to-morrow," I was exceedingly careful what I said, "and I thought you would kindly not mind my taking leave of you."

"This is a gay figure, Pip," said she, making her crutched stick play round me, as if she, the

fairy godmother who had changed me, were bestowing the finishing gift.

"I have come into such good fortune since I saw you last, Miss Havisham," I murmured. "And I am so grateful for it, Miss Havisham!"

"Ay, ay!" said she, looking at the discomfited and envious Sarah with delight. "I have seen Mr. Jaggers. I have heard about it, Pip. So you go to-morrow?"

"Yes, Miss Havisham."

"And you are adopted by a rich person?"

"Yes, Miss Havisham."

"Not named?"

"No, Miss Havisham."

"And Mr. Jaggers is made your guardian?"

"Yes, Miss Havisham."

She quite gloated on these questions and answers, so keen was her enjoyment of Sarah Pocket's jealous dismay. "Well!" she went on; "you have a promising career before you. Be good—deserve it—and abide by Mr. Jaggers's instructions." She looked at me, and looked at Sarah, and Sarah's countenance wrung out of her watchful face a cruel smile. "Good-by, Pip!—you will always keep the name of Pip, you know."

"Yes, Miss Havisham."

"Good-by, Pip!"

She stretched out her hand, and I went down on my knee and put it to my lips. I had not considered how I should take leave of her; it came naturally to me at the moment, to do this. She looked at Sarah Pocket with triumph in her weird eyes, and so I left my fairy godmother, with both her hands on her crutched stick, standing in the midst of the dimly lighted room beside the rotten bride-cake that was hidden in cobwebs.

Sarah Pocket conducted me down as if I were a Ghost who must be seen out. She could not get over my appearance, and was in the last degree confounded. I said "Good-by, Miss Pocket;" but she merely stared, and did not seem collected enough to know that I had spoken. Clear of the house, I made the best of my way back to Pumblechook's, took off my new clothes, made them into a bundle, and went back home in my older dress, carrying it—to speak the truth, much more at my ease too, though I had the bundle to carry.

And now those six days which were to have run out so slowly, had run out fast and were gone, and to-morrow looked me in the face more steadily than I could look at it. As the six evenings had dwindled away to five, to four, to three, to two, I had become more and more appreciative of the society of Joe and Biddy. On this last evening, I dressed myself out in my new clothes for their delight, and sat in my splendour until bedtime. We had a hot supper on the occasion, graced by the inevitable roast fowl, and we had some flip to finish with. We were all very low, and none the higher for pretending to be in spirits.

I was to leave our village at five in the morning, carrying my little hand-portmanteau, and

I had told Joe that I wished to walk away all alone. I am afraid—sore afraid—that this purpose originated in my sense of the contrast there would be between me and Joe, if we went to the coach together. I had pretended with myself that there was nothing of this taint in the arrangement; but when I went up to my little room on this last night I felt compelled to admit that it might be so, and had an impulse upon me to go down again and entreat Joe to walk with me in the morning. I did not.

All night there were coaches in my broken sleep, going to wrong places instead of to London, and having in the traces, now dogs, now cats, now pigs, now men—never horses. Fantastic failures of journeys occupied me until the day dawned and the birds were singing. Then, I got up and partly dressed, and sat at the window to take a last look out, and in taking it fell asleep.

Biddy was astir so early to get my breakfast, that, although I did not sleep at the window an hour, I smelt the smoke of the kitchen fire when I started up with a terrible idea that it must be late in the afternoon. But long after that, and long after I had heard the clinking of the teacups and was quite ready, I wanted the resolution to go down stairs. After all, I remained up there, repeatedly unlocking and unstrapping my small portmanteau and locking and strapping it up again, until Biddy called to me that I was late.

It was a hurried breakfast with no taste in it. I got up from the meal, saying with a sort of briskness, as if it had only just occurred to me, "Well! I suppose I must be off!" and then I kissed my sister who was laughing and nodding and shaking in her usual chair, and kissed Biddy, and threw my arms around Joe's neck. Then I took up my little portmanteau and walked out. The last I saw of them was when I presently heard a scuffle behind me, and looking back, saw Joe throwing an old shoe after me and Biddy throwing another old shoe. I stopped then, to wave my hat, and dear old Joe waved his

strong right arm above his head, crying huskily "Hooroar!" and Biddy put her apron to her face.

I walked away at a good pace, thinking it was easier to go than I had supposed it would be, and reflecting that it would never have done to have had an old shoe thrown after the coach, in sight of all the High-street. I whistled and made nothing of going. But the village was very peaceful and quiet, and the light mists were solemnly rising as if to show me the world, and I had been so innocent and little there, and all beyond was so unknown and great, that in a moment with a strong heave and sob I broke into tears. It was by the finger-post at the end of the village, and I laid my hand upon it, and said, "Good-by O my dear, dear friend!"

Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before—more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle. If I had cried before, I should have had Joe with me then.

So subdued I was by those tears, and by their breaking out again in the course of the quiet walk, that when I was on the coach, and it was clear of the town, I deliberated with an aching heart whether I would not get down when we changed horses, and walk back, and have another evening at home, and a better parting. We changed, and I had not made up my mind, and still reflected for my comfort that it would be quite practicable to get down and walk back, when we changed again. And while I was occupied with these deliberations, I would fancy an exact resemblance to Joe in some man coming along the road towards us, and my heart would beat high.—As if he could possibly be there!

We changed again, and yet again, and it was now too late and too far to go back, and I went on. And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me.

THIS IS THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF PIP'S EXPECTATIONS.

SCENERY OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Or "the old thirteen" states, perhaps not one is generally so disregarded by American poets and novelists as North Carolina, in spite of its fierce Indian wars, and of Sir Walter Raleigh's attempts to colonise it; in spite of its stormy capes of Hatteras and Look-out, of its woodmen and turpentine-gatherers; in spite of its gold region and copper-lands, its shad fisheries, and its great Dismal Swamp. Though North Carolina was the first state that solemnly renounced allegiance to the English crown, that historical fact is not attractive to travellers, and they seldom venture up the Great Pedee and the Wateree rivers. Even the rocks that still show traces of Indian paintings, and the bold precipices of Hickory-nut Gap, fail to allure any one but the pedlar and the omnipresent bagman.

Bat South Carolina has claims that are already recognised by the poet and historian as well as by the trader and pedlar. In 1678, when the English first settled amid the great pine tracts and broad lagunes that girdle Charleston, Locke framed a constitution for the infant colony, and modelled it upon the Promised Land of Plato. Amid Shaftesbury's turbulent intrigues, and the vices of Whitehall, the mind of that amiable philosopher was absorbed in dreams of purer faith and purer life in the bright unstained new country, where men had room at once to widen their tents and enlarge their frontiers.

Twenty years later, and the brave sturdy men who felled the pines and irrigated the rice in South Carolina, were recruited by bands of honest French Huguenots, driven from Languedoc by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,

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I had told Joe that I wished to walk away all alone. I am afraid—sore afraid—that this purpose originated in my sense of the contrast there would be between me and Joe, if we went to the coach together. I had pretended with myself that there was nothing of this taint in the arrangement; but when I went up to my little room on this last night I felt compelled to admit that it might be so, and had an impulse upon me to go down again and entreat Joe to walk with me in the morning. I did not.

All night there were coaches in my broken sleep, going to wrong places instead of to London, and having in the traces, now dogs, now cats, now pigs, now men—never horses. Fantastic failures of journeys occupied me until the day dawned and the birds were singing. Then, I got up and partly dressed, and sat at the window to take a last look out, and in taking it fell asleep.

Biddy was astir so early to get my breakfast, that, although I did not sleep at the window an hour, I smelt the smoke of the kitchen fire when I started up with a terrible idea that it must be late in the afternoon. But long after that, and long after I had heard the clinking of the teacups and was quite ready, I wanted the resolution to go down stairs. After all, I remained up there, repeatedly unlocking and unstrapping my small portmanteau and locking and strapping it up again, until Biddy called to me that I was late.

It was a hurried breakfast with no taste in it. I got up from the meal, saying with a sort of briskness, as if it had only just occurred to me, "Well! I suppose I must be off!" and then I kissed my sister who was laughing and nodding and shaking in her usual chair, and kissed Biddy, and threw my arms around Joe's neck. Then I took up my little portmanteau and walked out. The last I saw of them was when I presently heard a scuffle behind me, and looking back, saw Joe throwing an old shoe after me and Biddy throwing another old shoe. I stopped then, to wave my hat, and dear old Joe waved his

strong right arm above his head, crying huskily "Hooroar!" and Biddy put her apron to her face.

I walked away at a good pace, thinking it was easier to go than I had supposed it would be, and reflecting that it would never have done to have had an old shoe thrown after the coach, in sight of all the High-street. I whistled and made nothing of going. But the village was very peaceful and quiet, and the light mists were solemnly rising as if to show me the world, and I had been so innocent and little there, and all beyond was so unknown and great, that in a moment with a strong heave and sob I broke into tears. It was by the finger-post at the end of the village, and I laid my hand upon it, and said, "Good-by O my dear, dear friend!"

Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before—more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle. If I had cried before, I should have had Joe with me then.

So subdued I was by those tears, and by their breaking out again in the course of the quiet walk, that when I was on the coach, and it was clear of the town, I deliberated with an aching heart whether I would not get down when we changed horses, and walk back, and have another evening at home, and a better parting. We changed, and I had not made up my mind, and still reflected for my comfort that it would be quite practicable to get down and walk back, when we changed again. And while I was occupied with these deliberations, I would fancy an exact resemblance to Joe in some man coming along the road towards us, and my heart would beat high.—As if he could possibly be there!

We changed again, and yet again, and it was now too late and too far to go back, and I went on. And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me.

THIS IS THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF PIP'S EXPECTATIONS.

SCENERY OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Or "the old thirteen" states, perhaps not one is generally so disregarded by American poets and novelists as North Carolina, in spite of its fierce Indian wars, and of Sir Walter Raleigh's attempts to colonise it; in spite of its stormy capes of Hatteras and Look-out, of its woodmen and turpentine-gatherers; in spite of its gold region and copper-lands, its shad fisheries, and its great Dismal Swamp. Though North Carolina was the first state that solemnly renounced allegiance to the English crown, that historical fact is not attractive to travellers, and they seldom venture up the Great Pedee and the Wateree rivers. Even the rocks that still show traces of Indian paintings, and the bold precipices of Hickory-nut Gap, fail to allure any one but the pedlar and the omnipresent bagman.

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through at last, and the very alligator, fathom deep in the mud, awakes and knows that day has dawned in Carolina.

And now, too, as the river's banks with the tall brown reeds show themselves, I see a dead tree, and, on its highest scathed bough, two black specks which the captain tells me are bald-headed eagles; and yonder is a crane, "poor Joe," disconsolate, fishing on one leg—as if he had just felt the cramp, or symptoms of incipient gout in the other, and were thinking whether he should dine off fish to-day or not. Now I and the rest, warming ourselves in the sun, come down the steps from the high cabin and stand on the lower deck, at the head of the vessels just by the fires. There is a cask full of ashes at our feet, and a great littering heap of coals and pine-wood, together with a cogged wheel going to some rice-mill on the river, in care of those honest-looking engineers with hammers and tool bags, who stand near the engine-room door.

I am remarking to the captain, Mr. Noah Sickles, who has been upholding the excellence of alligator steaks, the curious fact, that every second woman you meet at Savannah is dressed in widow's weeds. Captain Noah replies, "Wall, it ain't nobow healthy, that's a fact," and looks over the ship's side, to see if he can show me an alligator; a "regular whaler" having been seen by him amusing himself on a log, just by General Oglethorpe's house, not ten days ago. Suddenly my eye falls on a square-looking case, carefully directed, that has been thrown carelessly down by some nigger stevedores, just by the dust heap, and half of it resting upon the litter of coals that strews the deck near the engine-room door. I think it is a grand piano, for it is labelled "Peabody's metallic hermetically sealed cases;" and directed to

Mrs. Esther Greeley, Richmond, Virginia.

With care.

Carriage paid.

It gives me rather a shudder to hear that what I have mistaken for a grand piano is really the body of

MR. JOSHUA GREELEY,

on his way home to the Richmond Cemetery, and his inconsolable wife. There is something ghastly in that pale man lying there, hid in his metallic ambush, under our gossip about fish, hawks, and alligators, and keeping all so imperceptibly to himself—yes, even to his (Mr. J. Greeley's) thoughts about my incorrect English pronunciation. But I see in it another proof of that recklessness and heedlessness of death that so specially marks the American, and which still remains a problem for the thinker. Perhaps the best solution of it is, that such heedlessness arises from no want of heart, but rather from that perpetual looking to the future instead of to the past which marks a new people, and from that fierce disregard of life that is always to be found in a frontier race, who are too busy and too warlike to waste much time in sentimental reflection.

The captain, turning round here, declares his belief that we shall see no "gater to-day, for it is getting late in the year." He then launches out into stories of the 'gaters generally on this river, and of their almost "supernatural" cunning.

He declares that on one occasion some boys at a rice-plantation near Augusta came to him, and told him they had been shooting at a 'gater for three days running and yet could not kill him. They had found his nest in a swamp, and had been waiting near it. So off he went with his rifle, and aiming first at the soft pouches under the 'gater's eyes, then at the boss on the crown of the 'gater's head, turned the 'gater over with the third shot, and made steaks of his flesh and boots of his skin. Wall, I guess those boys told the captain that they see that 'gater one day pursue a deer across the river, and the second day come floating up near some pigeons, with a sort of garland of grape-vine twisted round his head to hide it; and the captain had reason to place some reliance in this, for, on opening the 'gater's body, he found inside it two pigeons whole and undigested. "Oh, he was a reg'lar whaler!" says the captain. On this immortal occasion of shooting the whaler, the captain had recourse to the old lure of all 'gater-hunters—to a dog trained to yelp, and so attract the 'gaters, who like dog above all other meats. When a 'gater is floating down a stream, half asleep, unless you catch the winking of his eye, it is almost impossible, the captain says, to distinguish the wretch from a rusty log that has drifted from the bank.

The captain is an odd drunken being, with much of the conversational traditions of the old English coachman. If you notice a bundle of fresh-caught cat-fish hanging, still panting with life, at the cabin-door, he begins about negroes fishing, and of the enormous weight of occasional cat-fish; and if I refer to the late Mr. Greeley in the large sardine-box, he has stories to tell of the cholera in Savannah, when there were dead-houses built in every quarter of the city, and when carts full of coffins were perpetually seen going round for bodies. But as to his boat, he takes no heed of it, except to lament occasionally that the engineers don't know how to feed engine fires with anything but pine-wood.

As to the passengers, he takes no care of them either, except now and then to stop a "gater story," and assure the two millwrights that a dug-out with an old nigger will be sure to be waiting twenty miles further on, to paddle them to Mr. Laroche's rice-plantation: as indeed comes to pass.

Now we begin to get deeper among the rice-fields. They spread on either side of us, dotted here and there with negroes' cabins, and now and then by a planter's house. That wooden tower on the bank, with open sides and a pierced floor, is where they winnow the rice—the good grains fall below, the chaff and dust fly off above. Those green lined fields are the rice-fields, and those thin sharp green blades rising

among the starchy stalks are young rice-plants, soon to be cut off by frost. Those dams are the self-regulating dams that check the irrigation of the swampy fields, whose malaria white men can brave in winter only. It is the necessity of perpetually sluicing these rice-fields and laying them for days under water, that makes these rice districts of Carolina specially deadly to the European: so deadly, that every bale of Carolina rice may be said to cost a human life.

Fifteen days after sowing, these fields are laid under water, and again when the beautiful bunches of snowy nutritious seed are all but ripe; also, I believe, during some intermediate state as well. The great dread of the rice-planter is the rice-bird; just as the crop is ripe, these birds come in enormous flocks. The bird is a little bird with brown body and yellow wings, and, when the rice is over, goes to the north, just in time for the fruit season. Now, the captain explains to me that rice-land is very valuable, as it is only certain level tracts near rivers that are fit for the purpose of growing rice. That land there, mere ooze, half water and half mud, could be reclaimed into rice-land, though now it is all over wild oats and reeds; but it must be sufficiently drained, so that the negroes can leave it clear and warm at certain stages of ripening. That sloping land in the distance, up towards the pine-woods, would never grow rice. It is too far off for irrigation.

Here on the Savannah river, as often in Charleston afterwards, I take pains to ascertain the truth of the common Southern assertion, that white labour could not be used in the feverish rice-grounds. Irishmen have not been tried at it, but they have been tried in the equally dangerous irrigation of marshy lands on the banks of the Mississippi. There, fired with bad whisky, these reckless, hardy sons of toil work in gangs under a burning sun which even a negro at noon-day cannot and is not allowed to face, engaged in piling up those huge ramparts or *levees*, as the Southerners call them, which each district along the river is obliged to keep in repair, to save the whole country round from perpetual floods. "Why do they not employ the slaves?"

My dear friend, for this simple and intelligible reason: *Slaves are too valuable to be employed in such dangerous labour.*

But I must away with speed. Imagine me, then, a day or two after this, on a Carolina railway, racing on to Charleston, through leagues of aromatic pine-woods. A planter sitting next to me has been telling me, with infinite quaintness, quite unconscious of the cruelty that coloured the story, of a fat dropsical nigger he once hired, who would sleep all day, and used to torment his overseer by talking in an absurd way about dying of fever. "Waal, what did the overseer, who was a cute man, do, but go and buy a bundle of green cow-hides, and every day for a fortnight that overseer made that dropsical nigger walk round the shed where the cotton-press was kept,

he welting him all the time with the cow-hide. But such was the 'tarnal obstinacy of that dropsical nigger, that, would I believe it, he would not get well, and had eventually to be sent home? Oh, those niggers! they are the pig-headedest critturs in the world."

More pines—a coppery red on their scaly serpent-like trunks—their foliage dark and saturnine; no birds sing among their branches, but at their feet red bramble-stalks, arching and stunted crimson undergrowth of maple and glossy arbutus. At every station are great sacrificial altars of split pine-logs, distilling resin; and as we stop to take in fuel I hear the chump and clump of the logs as they are thrown into the fireman's tender. Everywhere rise delicious breathings of aroma from pine-woods, till I begin almost to believe with Bacon and the empirical doctors that "such resinous smells do specially fortify the brain, and recruit the wasted spirits;" all resinous smells, from pitch and turpentine, being peculiarly grateful to me. The fragrance reminds me, too, of the woods about the mountains that wall in Attica; for, by that old trick of the mind, the past seems always to me to have been golden, and the present to be lead: such a strange alchemist is Memory.

But now I find more attractive metal than the quaintly cruel planter, in a pretty Baltimore girl (the Baltimore women are the wonders of America), who, artless and unaffected as Imogene or Miranda, is playing with a pretty grey squirrel she has tamed, and which now leaps and glides all over the long railway carriage, to everybody's amusement and my special delight. It flies over the backs of our seats, skims down the centre way, slides under my arm, nibbles at a bit of "corn dodger" some one throws him, but always, sooner or later, with little staring timid eye, with bushing tail and pretty supplicative paws, hurries back, and slips quietly into his mistress's pocket, out of which every now and then his inquiring head and bright beady eyes peer out.

Let us leave the seaboard, and pass to the high sandy bluffs that further northward give way to mountain ledges, granite crags, and the splashing silver of such falls as those of Slicking. There, listening to stories of Indian chiefs and revolutionary combats, you may, from some rocky nest high up near the eagle, look down on sweet little coves of greensward, patches of maize, and rude log-cabins. But it is in such scenery as you find in the lowland of Carolina, round Midwary, that the roaming Englishman specially delights. There, you can find pine-woods, every third tree gashed and scarred to bleed out its turpentine, and further on, the huge bald cypress; with its boughs hung with beards of the grey dead-looking Spanish moss; there, bushes of the laurel, green and glittering in the sun, with spear-headed leaves. Here, too, are the fragrant bay-tree and the murderous ivy; here, amid this tropical vegetation, which in summer breathes deadly airs fatal to all but negroes, who alone remain all the year among it. The live oak

and orange grow side by side. On these trees the wild grape-vine, laden with fruit, hangs in fibrous festoons thick and strong as cables. Or, strolling on the banks of the river, you may hear the raftmen blowing their signal horns; or you may wander by the negro cabins, each with its garden and dovecot, for the negro is allowed to sell his master vegetables, fruit, and poultry. But often my own taste led me to the wild swamps round Turtle Cove, or to some of the more retired inlets and bayous. Here, stepping cautiously, for fear of snakes or alligators, you stride over some fallen tree that bridges the water, and pierce through avenues of ghostly cypresses, from which the moss hangs down in hoary drifts, like shreds of funeral banners in a chancel vault. Everywhere, is a sense of desolation, terror, despair, and death.

But let me tell one of my Southern dreams, after a week's roaming in South Carolina.

I am at a planter's house towards sunset, and I pass by the negro quarters, on my way to see a negro wedding—Mr. Sambo Smith and Miss Clara Brown. Everywhere I hear the banjo and the "Yah, yah!" of the dancers. Tired of the noise and tumult of boisterous happy fun, I wander on towards a cypress swamp. I pass into the wood—a blaze of tropical colour, with autumn leaves, that now echo with the voices of the mocking-bird, most versatile of floriturist singers. I leap into a dry rut, and push through the arching cypress roots deeper into the swamp. Suddenly it gets darker and deeper. The owl hoots above me, for here it is perpetual twilight. The snake hisses, the bull-frog groans like a half-lost spirit. No birds sing in this poisonous den of death. The foliage seems to drip baneful dew; the earth is dank wet; as those wild-ducks fluster up along the lagoon, a huge sleeping alligator rouses from the sedgy grass; and as "the skeleton crane" flies off shrieking, the steel-backed monster slides back into the green ooze that slowly absorbs him. Yonder he goes, steering slowly with his ridgy back, and now only his long head shows above the stream.

Heaven above us! Is that fire that bars the sky between the dark cypress-trees—broad widening veins of blood-colour like so many avenging angels' swords? No. That is the great conflagration of sunset commencing, rehearsal of the Last Day, beautiful yet terrible!

It is not the fire of burning towns yet: the region of the South still slumbers in peace. Yet who shall say for how long?

Do not let me forget that, though violent and impetuous as when they once before revolted from the union and were "whipped back," even northern American writers love to extenuate the faults of the Carolina people, and allow them to be—to use their own words—remarkable for "an ease, a grace, a generosity, and largeness of character, incompatible with the daily routine of the petty occupations and struggles of modern commercial life." Further, that the Carolina planters are men of an

old stock, accustomed to live in the country alone, uncontrolled, and habituated for generations to the institution of slavery.

MR. SINGLEMAN ON TEA.

LET there be no misunderstanding. Here is to be no scandal about Queen Howqua, no cowardly vilification of the tender wiry-leaved Pekoe, not a word against the exquisite essence and elegant extract, no cowardly stabbing in the dark! The man who could unhandsoinely take advantage of the present sour temperament of the public mind towards the Celestials, inflamed as it is by war and loot and tael and rich indemnities, and turn this popular fury to the disparagement of an innocent and harmless beverage, is fit for those hackneyed treasons, stratagems, and spoils. For him may some sly nymph covertly moisten a third, nay, a fourth time, exhausted grounds, and fill him forth a pale solution with a winning smile! Blasphemy against Bohea, soothing cheerer and no inebriator? No, not for worlds!

I must be permitted to set myself rectus in curia and above suspicion. Let me fortify myself in advance by loud praises and vehement protests of admiration. For it will come to pass that later in this paper I shall have to say what savours of hostility to the delectable beverage, more, indeed, in the manner of mild remonstrance—in sorrow rather than in anger—as one might chide a well-beloved but wayward child.

Alas! I am as a preacher who loveth his own sin. Confidentially and by way of confession, I own to a tenderness amounting almost to the illicit for this seductive extract. For the alcoholic sisterhood, your "spirits," whiskies, brandies, gins—above all, for the hot miscellany produced by intermarriage or admixture of hot waters with those distilled ethers—I have no manner of toleration. I fancy those stimulants only with a qualification: exceptionally that is, as a familiar whom I should be glad to see drop in now and then. But, for that softer maiden, so fair, so equable in temperament, so constant and habitual, yet never cloying, who waits on us neat-handed every morning and every evening from the cradle to the grave, I have not words to glorify her decent virtues. And yet I love my love with a qualification, and shall protest against her anon.

Tea is of Arcadia tea, and has an innocent pastoral flavour. I suspect it was popular in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. The stronger drinks have all the glare and guilt, the educated villany of the cities. Only consider her of the mornings, when the world is stretching itself wearily, and putting off its sleep; Mr. Singleman's boots and slippers lie in symmetrical rank and file; Mr. Singleman's garments, upper and nether, repose speckless in a neat bale upon contiguous chair; Mr. Singleman himself, struggling desperately with a dripping sponge, is as an antique statue or athlete rising from his tin tray, and cannot be too much saturated with the refreshing fluid. But while he

is busy with an energetic course of dry-towel-ling, almost making the sparks fly with the vigour of his friction, let us lift the warm portière which hangs before the "chambers," and see what entertainment awaits the antique statue when he shall descend, draped according to the rigorous superfluity of the age. Observe the coziness, the warmth, the colouring, the orderly disorder, the newness of the early morn upon all things. Phyllis has been with her besom, and has burnished and brightened all things. But the fire is surely the most enticing object; it hath now a clearness, a cleanliness, a bold brilliant contrast of ebony jet cubes with glowing red, which at a later time it wholly misses. It contracts, at a later time, a dusty rakish look, acquiring the raggedness and decay of ages, and is no longer a clean trim dandy fire, careful of its person. That snowy sheet which lies upon the ground, "got up" like fine linen, limp, damp, and by mortal fingers not yet unfolded, holds the morning's news, fresh from its oven—like the thin rolls upon the table. The arm-chair is drawn close, the white service is laid, and the kettle performs its Pan pipes music upon a little fanciful iron step made for it, and projecting from the bars.

Now, when I descend as a draped athlete (for I will no longer support the poor pretence of Singleman and myself being different persons), the very first object on which my eye falls with a species of affection is this musical kettle. For is it not in posse as to tea?—a vessel holding a familiar and homely component, which waits only the proper incantation, a few passes necromantic, to become a glorified fluid and transfigured liquor. I love this domestic hocus-pocus. My eye next falls with a pleased recognition on my Loysel. A word here in favour of my trusty Loysel, his power, properties, and beauties. I allude to the sort of burnished racing-cup, hermaphrodite engine, semi-urn, half teapot, yet not wholly either, which has sprung from the brain of an ingenious Frenchman.

It cost me a pang to be unfaithful to the older pot, the traditional vehicle with the spout and loop handle, associated with the breakfast Arcadia of block-tin, or Britannia metal, or of shining silver (and yet it seemed to come with a greater richness from the block-tin, but this may have been fanciful); there was a simplicity, a sweet uncivilisation, a pastoralness almost Pauline and Virginian, that enticed. There was an unerring certitude in the process, an unflinching confidence in the result. Three spoonfuls (was it?) for the beverage; one added beneficently as largesse for the pot; one perhaps added with a lingering hand to make all sure—and the product came out as a conclusion from logical premises. I own to a distrust of the costlier metal; I always fancied the interior to be slippery, and devoid of that richer adhesiveness; and it seems to generate (but in this I may do the nobler metal injustice) only a poor, thinnish fluid, known contemptuously among tea-bibbers as swash. And yet even now, for the

old brown enamelled pot—eminently plebeian—holding no more than a reasonably breakfast-cupful, overlaid with a rich varnish of a distinct mahogany colour, with a wilfulness in the lid to fall off and be smashed—for this ignoble vessel, I say, I have longings indefinable. It worked its office best of them all. The stream it spouted so full, so tawny, so brave, so strong, so fragrant, positively took away the breath; it imparted an earthy flavour which somehow the others could not reach to. I never knew wherein lay its mystery, in the material or in the globular formation. But then it was eminently a selfish pot, not by any means conjugal, wholly bachelorial. It did not reach beyond a cup; it broke down with ignominy when there was pressure put upon its resources. You might conveniently bake your beverage before the slow fire in its tempered clay. But for my Loysel.

It is the ingeniousness that takes the fancy—the mechanical pleasure of working a little distillery every morning. Above all, the certainty. After all, that was but a rude Hottentotide fashion, that flinging in of your three spoonfuls, and the saturation following, guided by no surer direction than the eye. A doubtful uncertain process, resulting but too often in painful miscarriage. A tea-making in the rough on backwoods principles, and surely unworthy of the enlarged science of our times. This was the first cloud that stole in between me and my little brown pot. By-and-by, I basely deserted her, like a double-dyed Pekoe villain as I was: I became the thrall of Loysel. I become my own miller under the new system, and in a little mill of my own grind my own grain into a fine black flour. It is brought to the mill gauged nicely in a little measure, like other flour. This introduction of human labour, this working for one's own support by the sweat of one's brow, imparts an indescribable zest to the process. I declare I would not pretermitt that operation (by my own hands) for any pretence whatsoever; and once was very wroth—very wroth—when neathanded Phyllis, not then precisely "my only joy," thought to gratify me by presenting this farinaceous matter already ground and in a state of fine detrition. After this useful labour and honest toil, I seem to partake of my humble means by a sort of agricultural title: having, as it were, come in from the fields a brave husbandman. Then I take off the lid of my Loysel—note that muffin discs, charged with butter and glistening oleaginous, are simmering into a golden brown before the fire, and that Phyllis will be up by-and-by with a round bulbous china dish, in which is imprisoned a rasher—then, inverting my Loysel lid upon his own apex, I bring over the kettle, and with a steady hand begin to pour. For me has this operation the charm of an eternal novelty. It never clogs. I look out wistfully, still pouring, for the first swelling of the golden beer-tinted flood—mark you, the tea is already made—as it wells and wells gently upward through the perforated sieve, deepening yet deepening in

tint, until it becomes a full mahogany brown. A sigh of relief as the flood reaches high-water mark—carefully replace the inverted cover—and Loysel is ready.

Take it that we have been abroad last night hearing chimes at midnight, and such unbecoming music, and that we wake with a new and artificial palate made of heated copper. How gratefully we drain the bowl—for bowl it must be—a satisfying immensity—a small tea ocean—which we may swill and swill again, irrigating the parched surfaces. There is nothing comparable to that matutinal refreshment. There is a purity and innocence about that intemperance, compared with which your sharp stinging garish sodas sound mundane and guilty. Rowing gentlemen rave of that frothy decapitation of their first “head” of porter (so it runs in their low phrase) after a protracted training abstinence. Yet it cannot compare with this early draught. Who was it in the novels that spoke unctuously of a “dish” of tea? I love the word. “Another dish of tea, madam!” It was the elderly gentleman of the party—the benevolent monitor in smalls—say Mr. Woodville. One of the tenderest recollections of childhood, a green patch amid the brakes and briars of school days, is associated with the beverage. Nauseating at last the rough coarse substantial fare of the place, the lumps of good ploughman’s feeding of the first quality, the strong milks and stronger meats, we fly of an evening to the awful presence of authority, and with fear crave leave to retire to those bright paradisaical regions of warm fires and matronly care known as the Infirmary. And passing an awful probation—not without suspicion and a searching examination into the genuineness of those symptoms—alas, at that guileless age, but too often simulated!—we fly exulting to the warm chamber of beatitude, the nectar made and served by Hebe, the glorified elderly matron; the buttered toast, conveying more accurately than any earthly similitude the exact savour of manna.

After the tempest, when the stormy winds have been blowing cruelly, oh, welcome comes the first draught of tea—even of that poor diluted wash which Phyllis serves to us for sixpence from behind the refreshment counter. Gratefully it soothes its way downwards after that bitter labour. It warms and invigorates. It works its office domestically. It does not restore with violence, as is the fashion with brandies, and such rude awakeners.

And now remains that unpleasing duty of protest alluded to delicately but a few minutes since. I must lift up my voice, temporarily, against this sweet consoler and dear delight. The seductive drink is demoralising our women. Not putting too fine a point upon it—calling a spade a spade—making no bones about it—in short, putting it as plainly and grossly as possible—they have grown addicted to this liquor, and are uproarious over their cups. The practice is growing monstrous, and cries out for repression. Permit me to illustrate

my meaning by a little tableau drawn from our hearths and altars.

The little tableau is in this wise: Straying carelessly, as it might be, in the capacity of a child of nature—a capacity which I take on me as the shades of visiting-time close in slowly—into particular drawing-room pastures, where I am always welcome to browse (colloquially), I am in the habit of taking the strain off the overwrought mind by easy and familiar converse with the ladies of our islands. In this rôle of a lord of the creation, enthroned in an easy-chair—specially when not constrained by the presence of competing lords of the creation—the mind takes a healthy diversion, and homage is done to that complacent superiority in most gratifying fashion. It is what may be termed the lull of the day; the toils of morn and of noon are spent, and the mind is drawing back and gathering itself up for a further spring, in the direction of dinner. Over the whole plays the lurid half-light of the crackling fire. Pretty tableau!

And yet the scene has been blighted. This fair picture of innocence has been ravaged and laid waste. The demon of drink has penetrated, and is demoralising our women fast. A system of gigantic dram-drinking has grown up, and the virgins are addicted to hyson. I stray into my accustomed pastures, expecting the familiar partial solitude, the selected few, the half light, the ready chair; and, above all, that pleasing monopoly and exclusive patent of conversation which no one is willing to infringe. I find, instead, that I have strayed into a meeting of lay women—a whole flower-bed of bonnets—a glare of colours (unrelieved by any bold masculine black) perfectly offensive to the eye. It is a dwelling-house overcrowded; and I think the Common Lodging-house Act would apply. Looking round, and wholly overborne by the hum of excited voices and exaggerated gesticulation, and that putting home of favourite views and theories by the illogical aid of profuse affectionate endearments, I collect my wandering senses, and must be blind indeed not to see that other influences besides a pure feminine hilarity have been at work. No disrespect is here intended, I solemnly protest; but whence this suspicious unloosing of tongues? The lady at the bar—fair tapster!—who is “drawing” the brown stout liquor with a professional deftness, can barely meet the requirements of the demand. There is a run upon the beverage, and a clatter of silver upon china, and an importunate persistency. I can see my dear sisters mellowing perceptibly. As with these other intemperance, it hurries to the cheeks and to the extremity of the little facial mountain, flushing them suggestively.

I admire the ineffable relish, the luscious gulp, with which some despatch their dram; it is not, so to speak, tossed off—I cannot bring myself to the barbarism “swigged,” and yet it verges most nearly on that muscular act—but slowly absorbed in large exhaustive draughts. The mouth is well filled, the heat and strength

enjoyed, in transitu, by an exquisite anticipation, and then forced by a sort of mechanical action in the thorax down to its long home below.

There is a frightful panorama, imagined by Mr. Cruikshank, embodying the descending stages of degradation induced among the lower classes by a fatal excess in drink: it is called *The Bottle*. I would invite that inimitable artist to illustrate in a corresponding series the no less fatal consequences of an immoderate indulgence in the cheering and inebriating fluid, the subject of this paper. Let the inimitable artist style it *THE TEAPOT*. Let him deal with his matter progressively. Let his first plate be *The Happy Home*—the abode of peace and innocence, and crochet, and slipper working, and smoking-cap embroidering, and quiet enlightenment by that stray lord of creation, the instructive lay preacher, who wanders ere yet the tocsin has sounded for dinner-dressing, tells his simple story, and goes his way. *That* is their present stimulant. They shall look back hereafter, with a pang, to those hours of easy converse. Second plate: *The Tempter*. Miss Jenkinwaters has dropped in—who has spirits (mark the prophetic significance of the word)—such lively spirits—and who has been yesterday—only yesterday, my dears—with Lady Mary Greymalkin—who (the funniest notion in the world—'twill kill her with laughing!) had in Tea—absolutely Tea! It was the nicest, prettiest, most comical and diverting idea in the world! So out of the way—so odd! But these innocent girls, not yet wholly vitiated by that corruption in which Miss Jenkinwaters may be said to be steeped, pause and check themselves on the brink of a precipice. Yet, soon follows the playful suggestion of Tempter Jenkinwaters, to follow in an humble way the exemplar of the illustrious Lady Mary, and have in by way of pure joke the vessels and materials and compound, just for the sake of trying the thing; the innocent eyes are downcast, the voice falters; Mephistopheles Jenkinwaters presses them noisily, laughs away their idle scruples, goes herself to ring the bell, and the fatal materials are had in. Third Tableau: *The Gentle Sisters* have become *Habitual Topers*. Fearing lest the unusual swelling of the grocer's account should betray their secret practice, they have recourse to denying themselves small articles of wearing apparel and ornament, and devoting the proceeds to the purchase of the horrid stimulant. A sort of moral Pawn-broking goes on. The own maid goes out surreptitiously to establishments which have a reputation, and brings home choice and costly growths—green and otherwise. The strength of the drams is daily intensified. They begin to laugh at the early indiscretion. The number of glasses—cups, I mean—is increased daily. They become seasoned casks—I mean teapots—no, vessels. The youngest has become a notorious tea drunkard. She takes her "morning" before rising, besides numerous glasses—no, cups—up and down, at uncer-

tain intervals during the day. She has already a decayed green-tea look. Her eye is restless. Public works are suspended: no more slippers or smoking-caps. She is restless and unsettled. Last Tableau of all: should portray the drawing-room after one of these orgies, with female Bacchantes in possession, and broken-spirited grey-haired parent with hands uplifted to heaven, bemoaning the degradation of his children, as, hardened in guilt, they say, with brazen effrontery, to their boon sisters, "Don't mind, it's only papa!" One will presently thrust a glass—cup, I mean—into his trembling fingers, and offer to fill him out drink. They have no shame of the servants; and those familiars come to and fro with kettles and urns. Servants! Nay, little infants at the mother's knee have seething jorums placed in their tiny fingers, and have a taste for vice implanted in them at their early age.

To this affecting series (greatly needed) Mr. Singleman will, with a sad joy, subscribe. On the principle of the charitable offers occasionally advertised in the newspapers, he hereby announces that he will take fifty thousand copies if anybody else will.

THE SACRED CITY.

THE northern winter was over and gone
From the stormy Scandinavian shore,
And the brief bright summer all brilliantly shone,
And the voice of the tempest was heard no more,
When a galley was launched on the northern seas.
A gallant company she bore,
Sturdy warriors, women meek;
A shout went after them from the shore,
For they were pilgrims bound to seek

The holy city of Asgard.

The holy city of Asgard stands.
(So the northern legends tell),
Built by other than mortal hands,
For the Scandinavian gods to dwell
In its mighty palaces,
In the very centre of all the world,
In the eye of the earth it stands alone,
And from thence o'er the trembling nations are hurled
The thunders that issue from Odin's throne
In the holy city of Asgard.

The mightiest mountain the round world owns
Is but a hillock beside that throne,
And thence great Odin's terrible ken
Watches the thoughts and deeds of men,
To him nothing is left unknown.
Around him is gathered his court divine,
The Ases, all gods and goddesses,
In immortal strength and beauty they shine,
Dwelling in endless blessedness,
In the holy city of Asgard.

Thor is there, and Balder, and Tyr,
Freir, Niorder, and Braga, and Loke—
Thirteen gods (so the legends aver)—
Whose aid and protection men should invoke.
And there are goddesses, fair as day,
Frigga, Lara, Eira, Var,
Vora and Sinia, Gefionia and Linia—
Eighteen in all round great Odin's car,
In the holy city of Asgard.

Furthermore, the legend declares
That Odin has not forbidden to men

To seek his dwelling; nay, more, who dares
To brave the dangers by ford and fen,
By sea and land, by mountain and river
That compass it round, for his noble endeavour
Shall dwell 'mid the Ases in glory for ever
In the holy city of Asgard.

And thus it was on that glad May-day
That the band of pilgrims sailed away;—
Sailed away, strong in hope and faith,
Brave to encounter danger and death,
Unknown terrors by field and flood,
Dragons and giants athirst for blood—
And all to see the face of their god

In his holy city of Asgard.

They travelled by day, they travelled by night,
Danger and terror and pain they met;
The women fainted, the strong men's might
Daily weakened and waned, and yet
They struggled along the dubious path
That was leading them onward to certain death,
Supported still by their earnest faith

In the holy city of Asgard.

All of them perished: their corpses strewed
Many a valley and mountain and flood;
Not one returned to repeat the tale
How all their labour could nought avail;
How woman's love and how manhood's strength
Had all been wasted, and spent in vain
On a sheer delusion; and how at length
They were never the nearer, for all their pain,
To the holy city of Asgard.

We read the story, and calmly smile
At those foolish Norsemen in times of old,
Who could let such childish legends beguile
Their senses, and strongly hold
Their minds enthralled at such baseless dreams,
Such wild, impossible phantom gleams;
We wonder how human destinies
Could ever be swayed by fables like these
Of the holy city of Asgard.

Granted, they died in a foolish cause,
They were heathens, my friend, rank pagans all,
Their light was darkness, their creed, their laws
Of religion and morals could but enthrall
Their souls in bondage. But you and I,
Who know where the city of God doth lie,—
As those pagans strove, do we Christians strive
With body and heart and soul to arrive

At the heavenly city of Asgard?

THE FROZEN-OUT POOR LAW.

WE have seen, during this hard winter, general and utter practical condemnation of the working of our Poor Law system. Thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children, hungered and shivered at our doors. Every heart was touched with sympathy for the widespread distress, and men inquired of each other where or how to give out of their abundance, or out of their own more tolerable poverty, something towards feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the houseless. But it does not appear that it once occurred even to any maniac that, as our Poor Law system is a great national system expressly formed to carry out those ends, and furnished with a large staff of administrators, we had but to pour freely our voluntary offerings into the hands of the Poor Law guardians,

and rely upon the proper guardianship of the poor. Private associations of all kinds were formed and proposed. It rained money on the desks of police magistrates, who, to the best of their ability, separated cases of destitution from cases of mock destitution besetting the doors of the police-courts. At the Mansion House alone (representing a district where comparatively few poor people dwell), three thousand destitute persons were relieved during the three weeks of severest pressure. At the Thames police-court, pressure was still greater, and it was great elsewhere. Soup kitchens were formed by knots of families; bread went out of pantries; people with leisure enough, by whom heretofore the duty had been overlooked, sought the homes of the suffering; even prudence yielded to the irresistible temptation to give almost indiscriminate alms in the streets.

What was the Poor Law system doing all this time? Discouraging, as usual, appeals for help; making the bread of the poor given in charity—say rather due from human justice—bitter, in order that as many stomachs as were not too hungry to be turned, might turn from it. The principle upon which relief is administered under the law that taxes us for succour of the poor appears to be, to make the help rendered so distasteful, that they must be far gone indeed in wretchedness who will apply for it; and the high-hearted poor will starve rather than take it, will die instead of coming on the rates. From the Poor Law Commissioners down to the most ignorant relieving officer, reduction in the number of paupers, saving in the rates levied for poor relief, is acknowledged as the final aim to which the work of the three-and-twenty thousand Poor Law officers must point and which the twelve thousand reports annually sent in to the Poor Law Board must illustrate as far as possible. The report of the Poor Law Board issued this year, strikes this key-note in its opening sentence. "We are happy," it says, "to be able to state, that since the Poor Law Amendment Act came into operation, the sum annually expended for 'Relief to the Poor' has very largely decreased, and that this expenditure is in a diminishing ratio when compared with the population and wealth of the country."

Did this blessed Board, considered as a Board, keep happy Christmas on this thought? Did it see the shivering Christmas of the lanes and hovels, looking everywhere but to the workhouse for the hand of fellowship to comfort them; the "wealth and population of the country" looking everywhere but to the workhouse officials for trustworthy almoners in men who know and understand the poor? Did it see its whole system swept aside with contempt as useless for its purpose in the hour of need, and did it consider as a Board what it might say in its next year's report, about its own skill in effecting savings of the public alms? For the Poor Law Board, charity is a nursing mother who puts aloe on her nipple. In the report before us, there is not a syllable suggestive of the noble human duty underlying the whole law of poor relief,

not the remotest hint of a desire to ask whether the duty is performed, whether there is helplessness and destitution, which the strong arm of the most generous and charitable nation upon earth, has yet failed to support. No. The sole and whole inquiry is, How many pounds less have been paid, how many pounds more are to be saved?

The Poor-Law Amendment Act came into operation in the autumn of 1834. During the twenty-two last years of the old system, an average of six millions and a half a year was given by England to the poor. Since the Amendment Act, the yearly average has been less than five millions and a quarter; in a quarter of a century, more than thirty-three millions of pounds have been deducted from the sum that would, under the old system, have been paid; and of the remainder, twenty millions have been spent in building workhouses and paying salaries of union officers. These count, of course, as items of poor relief: the sum now spent in England for national poor relief being a little more than five millions and a half, yielded by the poor-rate. The poor-rate includes borough or police-rate, law expenses, cost of registries; more than a fourth of the sum raised under the name of poor-rate, having, in fact, no connexion whatever with relief of the poor. "More than a fourth is the estimate of the Board." We think they might have said more than a third.

And still the cry is, lo, how much we save! The average rate per head on the population for support of its destitute poor, used to be ten and fourpence; now, glory be to us, it is six and a halfpenny. Increase of population being considered, if we had gone on at the same rate per head, ninety-one millions would have been spent on the poor over and above what we have asked you for. In proportion to the increased wealth of the country, the charge on your pockets, people of England, is half what it used to be before we, the mighty Poor Law Board, began to look after the paupers. Looking at the matter in regard to proportion with the comparison of commerce, you are now saving three shillings out of four. In spite of the increase since the act came into force of from fourteen to twenty million of population, we, the Board, have actually diminished by three-quarters of a million the yearly national dole to the destitute. Kiss the red tape on the hem of our garments!

But we, for the public, cannot read with patience the felicitations founded on such figures. It is not true, it is notoriously and manifestly false, that they mean simply a proportionate ceasing of the poor from among us. Six million more people, and yet no more poor, yet even fewer poor? Turn out of any street of London into its by-lanes and alleys; see dense towns within the town, Agar Town, Bethnal-green, Rotherhithe, Radcliffe, Wapping, small cities of hunger; ask any country doctor whether there are rural poor, and how much suffering they learn to regard as but the natural wear and tear of a life that is one long ache of privation; and then join in the congratulations of the Poor Law Board at the decrease of poverty.

The Poor Law Board cannot require to be told what its figures really mean. We all know in what way the unpatronised pauper is kept off the rates as long as possible. Here, for example, is a piece of experience so matter of course that it may be wondered why we cite it. A woman, during the intense frost, was met in the evening carrying home her weekly quartern loaf from Saint Pancras Workhouse. (Was it not there that guardians of the poor, not long ago, excited wrath among parishioners by putting themselves on the parish for hot dinners at their weekly meetings?) The woman was met shivering with cold; she had been waiting for her dole, from twelve o'clock till half-past four, in a room with a stone floor, which she declared had not been warmed in any way. "I could have stood it better," she said, "if there hadn't been such a dreadful cold draught from them ventilating places all round the floor." The "ventilators" out of which the cold blast came, were the pipes of the disused warming apparatus. It was not desirable to use that apparatus for the benefit of paupers, even when the thermometer wavered between freezing and zero. Everybody who waited would get deservedly pinched for coming, and, though half a dozen, or a dozen, or a score, would feel it afterwards in their lungs, or be plagued with rheumatic pains when they desired to be industrious, the whole gain of so much discouragement to the demand for parish bread was not to be sacrificed on that account. A vestryman is asked whether this woman's story, not the first or the tenth of its kind, could be true; were the poor really exposed to so much suffering when they came for relief? "Yes," he replied, "and wilfully. I have tried to effect a change, but only three would side with me. The rest thought that if the poor creatures were made too comfortable, more would come." We take our illustration from St. Pancras simply because it is natural for anybody to look to St. Pancras of evil repute, when he wishes to lay his hand on any sort of abuse incident to the administration of the Poor Law. But the illustration serves for the whole system, which makes workhouses discouragements to poverty, and gaols encouragements to crime. It is because everybody knows that by this system of encouragement practised in a hundred petty ways, there has been secured, not only a constant lessening of the amount of relief given to the poor, but a constant increase of the repugnance with which it is taken; it is because of this, that in the late days of extreme suffering, *it was everywhere but to the ordained almoners of the public that the public sent its alms for distribution.*

We say that the Poor Law Board is a costly abuse, and a pernicious sham. We believe that there is scarcely one public department, if one, under the unfortunate necessity of having to do business with it, that does not know it to be a heap of troublesome and complacent rottenness. It is in fairness to be observed, on the other hand, that there are some Boards of Guardians, chiefly composed of ignorant and noisy men,

the most pestilent persons in their parish, who systematically oppose themselves to any languid efforts towards the improvement of their proceedings made by the Board, and for whose misdeeds the Board is not to be held responsible. This is perfectly true. But when the Board is so mighty complacent on the reduction of the amount spent in relieving the poor; does it tell us of these vestrymen, of its inability to strive against their pot-valiant demonstrations, of its knowledge that they are the wrong order of men for their trust, of its very strong suspicions that they sometimes relieve their own tenants and customers more freely than other poor, and thus convert their bad debts into good? If the Board were what it ought to be, and did its duty, would it not favour us with a hint or so of its inability to deal with these hucksters, instead of tamely and lamely singing songs of rejoicing over their works, and making itself Air, when most needed?

But, it is said, rates must be kept down. They are already ruinous in the poor parishes. The truth is—a truth we have urged again and again—rates must be equalised. While each parish maintains its own poor, what is to become of paupers who almost make up a parish of their own, and have to pay the most enormous rates out of the smallest means? On the other hand, in polite regions, inhabited by wealth and fashion, there are so few poor, that of the wealthiest the law asks but a mite. Clearly this is worse than absurd; in practice it is iniquitous; and the one remedy is an uniform rate diffused over large areas, if not one national rate. The London parishes pay rates varying from one penny to eight shillings, the highest being invariably levied on the poorest men. It has been calculated that the whole work of relief might be done by one uniform levy of twopence in the pound upon all rateable property. Whatever the amount in the pound of such a rate might be, it would be fairly distributed, and, we are certain, cheerfully borne. Speculative objections to this plan chiefly run in the favourite groove of economy. It is said that the strong local interest in keeping down the rates would be lost, and waste would follow.

But the fiction of economy is the next great source of the failure of the Poor Law system. Because of it we may almost believe that every penny given to the poor rate has been wasted. Had there been no workhouses, and no commissioners congratulating themselves on decrease of the amounts spent in poor relief, could our streets have been more thronged with miserable creatures than they have been; could our police magistrates have been more hungrily surrounded; could the columns of the Times record a greater sense of uneasiness on the part of the charitable; could the details of want suffered by the well-deserving, have been much more dreadful; than they were when the year began on which we have now entered with the faintest hope that it may bring some remedy for all this grief?

*Admit, that the local administration of parish

funds falls sometimes into the hands of noisy and jobbing vestrymen who ape all the accidents of evil in self-government, and nearly make us blind to its essential good; admit that these men, who would be simply ridiculous if they were less mischievous, do not represent the merciful and generous nature of the contributors with whose money they deal; admit that there is creeping into English public affairs the vice so obvious in American public affairs, to wit, that the best disposed people are too apt to leave them alone,—these are but lesser branches of the evil that grows, spreads, and overshadows us. At the root of all, is that Board, with an immense machinery and a costly staff, over the institution of which Board there were such pæans sung as were never sung in parliament yet, and such politico-economical rejoicings raised as never were raised before under heaven. Where was this wonderful Board when the people were perishing of want and cold? Why was its machinery not instantly set in motion for the spiriting up of lazy vestries, for the seeking out of misery, for the administration of the Poor Law—which is law for the relief of the distressed—and for stern enforcement of that law upon little authorities that will not even see starvation when it lies at their gate in the very article of death?

Until there is equalisation of poor rates it is in the known course of nature that certain poor parishes, such as those along the Thames by Ratchliffe and Wapping, must have in some seasons nearly their whole population thrown out of work, and must become bankrupt parishes of paupers. The necessity is occasional, but not exceptional. It is a misery to be foreseen; and is it no part of the Board's duty to regard it as a misery to be provided for, a matter at least of special representation and of special counsel to the government? If the Board, in short, when a few weeks of frost gave it something to live for, gave no signs of life, was nowhere to be seen or heard of, had no previous existence marked enough even to bring it at that crisis into people's minds, if it was dead and buried under the twelve thousand annual reports sent in by its officials, or entirely lost in abstract compilation from the twelve thousand reports of its own annual report of the happy continuance of decrease in the number of poor succoured through its agency, of what use is the Board, and why is it maintained?

The time will soon come when the renewal of this Board must be discussed and decided on in parliament. Let the generous people who have been sending money to poor-boxes, to refuges, to the Times, and where not, be wise for the future, and insist on the settlement of these questions before the next time that the wolf comes, as it is inevitable that he will come, to our door. We want as a system of poor relief, not that which gives coldly to the poor who come for aid in spite of all discouragement, but that which embodies the true mind of a really and truly charitable nation. What we

all want to see in the report of the Poor Law Board is not, "Lo, we have spent so little upon, and have saved so much as compared with the year preceding out of, so many paupers;" but, "Lo, we have really and efficiently relieved in this Christian country so much undoubted distress, and our help is still so much short of completeness." The public would pay anything for the real relief of the poor. An equalised rate, even if it were ten times more than the tax it would be, would be borne thankfully if it did really remove the shame of beggars from the streets, and did really purchase for us the real "Christian knowledge," that no moderately deserving and striving person could possibly die of cold and hunger. The Englishman is always liberal in payment for a service he secures. He looks first at efficiency, and secondly at cost; and as he sees need of very much further amendment in a Poor Law system that cannot stand the climate of the country, to say nothing of its other faults, he grudges the cost of bad service, and will grudge it, though in course of years it be reduced until the Board rejoices in the expenditure of half its present outlay on a doubled population.

But the Board will not live to do that. It must live with the life of the people whom it serves, or it must inevitably die soon and give place to something sturdier and wiser than itself—something mindful above all things of the solemn duty to be done.

PEDLARS' CONGRESS.

VATTEL informs us that there are three varieties of congresses known in diplomacy. First, there is the Congress of Princes, such as that of Verona, where the regnants settle how insurrections are to be put down; next, we have the Congress of Plenipotentiaries, as that of Aix-la-Chapelle; and lastly, the mixed Congress, where princes and ambassadors form a diplomatic pot-pourri. The erudite writer has entirely omitted another Congress: the German Pedlars' Congress, held every January and June.

Ehningen, the place where the Congress is held, is situated at the foot of the Rauhe Alp, in Würtemberg. It is possibly a shade dirtier than other German villages, and an unusual number of masterless pigs roam about its narrow streets. Though assumed to contain five thousand inhabitants, if you visit it at any other period than that of the half-yearly Congress, you will probably only meet the parish priest's swineherd; for the entire population lives by hawking. The Teutonic Cheap Jack hails from Ehningen, and he and his fellows attend every fair for hundreds of miles around.

As the period for the Congress arrives, all the roads leading to Ehningen are thronged with homeward-bound pedlars, their wives, and children. They have to reckon up the profits of the year, attend to parochial matters, marry their daughters, and last, but not least, lay in their wares for the coming season. The Congress, in a word, is composed of commercial

gentlemen, who arrive from all parts of the civilised world, to do business with men who can scarcely write their own names, and find it a hard matter to make both ends meet. Still, many of these pedlars have a yearly credit amounting to five thousand pounds. The traveller to any large wholesale house would be supposed to have neglected the interests of his masters unless he took orders for at least twenty thousand pounds at each Congress. As at least two hundred travellers annually arrive at Ehningen for orders, Vattel might have mentioned the Congress without any derogation to diplomacy. The most curious thing is, that, though this enormous amount of credit is granted to men only one remove from pauperdom, very few bad debts are made. The pedlars have their pride as well as the richest merchant, and starve themselves in order to meet their payments.

There is only one inn at Ehningen, where the travellers dine together, lodging in the private houses. German commercial gents represent the fast type of the nation, and though this class is much alike all over the world, indulging to an extreme in loud patterns and heavy jewellery, the Germans surpass their brethren by their insane love of smashing everything. Mine host of the Traube can tell you many a quaint story about his guests: how, on one occasion, four of them destroyed property valued at eight hundred and thirty florins, which they paid for without a murmur.

So soon as the commercial gentleman has established himself, he hires a young girl, representing the Boots of civilisation, who leads him to the houses of his various customers. The female population of Ehningen are peculiar for a damp umbrella smell, by which you can know them all through Germany. Båbele then wades along through the slush, and stops before the first house, where the new arrival forms the end of a long queue of travellers standing on the rickety wooden ladder leading to the door. It is the fashion at Ehningen that the gentlemen bagmen should pay their respects to their customers, and inquire at what hour they will be pleased to look at samples.

At length, our special traveller's turn arrives, and he enters the low-roofed smoky sleeping-room. Here the host probably offers him a hand odorous of the pigsty, while madame is tidying herself at the glass, in short petticoats which have once been cleaner. The traveller begins by inquiring after the health of all the family, gradually working round to the object of his visit. Can Hans Michel, or, as the case may be, do anything in calicoes? Hans Michel appeals to Matchen for her advice, and she replies that they are full of calico up to the eyes, but there can be no harm in having a look. Thereupon Hans consults a very dirty piece of paper covered with hieroglyphics, and at length expresses his opinion that the traveller may call next Thursday week at two p.m. The traveller books the hour, and proceeds to the next house on the same errand. When all the visits have been paid, the traveller generally finds that he

has a week's leisure before business commences, for the worthy pedlars are not at all disposed to hurry. A holiday is such a rarity to them that they enjoy it to their hearts' content.

While the pedlars are busied in regulating their domestic affairs and bothering their brains over the different currencies which represent their floating capital, the commercial gentlemen indulge in their sole recreation—drinking and playing at skittles. How large their consumption of liquids might be is proved by the fact that mine host of the Traube is enabled to keep his house open, year out year in, on his six weeks' receipts. No one would visit Ehningen save on compulsion. The quantity of champagne consumed in those six weeks would run the Widow dry, but, fortunately for her, the rhubarb juice answers the purpose indifferently well. With the German commercial travellers quantity is the rule, quality the exception.

When business begins in earnest, it is satisfactory. If the pedlar wants your article he gives you a large order; if already overstocked, he tells you so at once. There is no beating about the bush, no buying job lots at a discount, because the hawker has no ready money: that is swallowed up by back debts. He simply lives from hand to mouth, and never can become rich, because he must pay what the wholesale houses think proper to charge in order to cover the risk. The traveller advises his house, the goods are delivered at various points on the pedlar's round, and so soon as the last order has been obtained the Congress breaks up. There is no signing of parchments.

So soon as the commercial travellers have departed, the pedlar sets his house in order, puts a clumsy padlock on the door, and recommences his life's dull round. The articles in which he deals are principally laces, calico, shawls, ribbons, silk handkerchiefs, woollens of every description, and, at times, mock jewellery. So soon as the fair is over, he packs his traps on his own and his family's back and trudges off to the next town. It was always a puzzle why every German almanack contained such an accurate list of fairs, but Pedlars' Congress solves the riddle. The list is drawn up for the special information of the pedlars.

Pedlars' Congress goes to prove how far back the Germans still remain on the path of progress. Among us, a pedlar is a rarity; his place is occupied by the tallyman or the duffer, who sells cotton-backed silks as smuggled French goods, and takes silly women in. In Germany, we see that the pedlars are a very important trade factor. But the cream has been skimmed from the Ehningen Congress. German peasants, ignorant though they may be in other respects, have a keen eye for a kreutzer saved. With modern progress, and increased locomotive advantages, they learn that it is cheaper to buy at the Residenz, and the pedlars are gradually finding goods left on their hands, the payment for which depends on quick returns. Hence, before long, there will be a grand com-

mercial crisis in Germany, and Pedlars' Congress will come to be reckoned among the things of the past.

A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I HAD no writing materials, but I had just composed a long letter to the Times on "the outrageous treatment and false imprisonment of a British subject in Austria," when my door was opened by a thin, lank-jawed, fierce-eyed man, in uniform, who announced himself as the Rittmeister von Mahony, of the Keyser Hussars.

"A countryman—an Irishman," said I, eagerly, clasping his hand with warmth.

"That is to say, two generations back," replied he; "my grandfather Terence was a lieutenant in Treuck's Horse, but since that none of us have ever been out of Austria."

If these tidings fell coldly on my heart just beginning to glow with the ardour of home and country, I soon saw that it takes more than two generations to wash out the Irishman from a man's nature. The honest Rittmeister, with scarcely a word of English in his vocabulary, was as hearty a countryman as if he had never journeyed out of the land of Bog.

"He had heard 'all about it,'" he said, by way of arresting the eloquent indignation that filled me; and he added, "And the more fool myself to notice the matter;" asking me, quaintly, if I never had heard of our native maxim that says, "One man ought never to fall upon forty"? "Well," said he, with a sigh, "what's done can't be undone; and let us see what's to come next? I see you are a gentleman, and the worse luck yours."

"What do you mean by that?" asked I.

"Just this: you'll have to fight; and if you were a 'Gemeiner'—a plebeian—you'd get off."

I turned away to the window to wipe a tear out of my eye; it had come there without my knowing it, and, as I did so, I devoted myself to the death of a hero.

"Yes," said I, "*she* is in this incident—*she* has her part in this scene of my life's drama, and I will not disgrace her presence. I will die like a man of honour rather than that her name should be disparaged."

He went on to tell me of my opponent, who was brother to a reigning sovereign, and himself a royal highness—Prince Max of Swabia. "He was not," he added, "by any means a bad fellow, though not reputed to be perfectly sane on certain topics." However, as his eccentricities were very harmless ones, merely offshoots of an exaggerated personal vanity, it was supposed that some active service, and a little more intercourse with the world, would cure him. "Not," added he, "that one can say he has shown many signs of amendment up to this, for he never makes an excursion of half a dozen days from home without coming back filled with the resistless passion of some young queen or archduchess for him. As he forgets these as fast as he imagines them, there is usually nothing to

lament on the subject. Now you are in possession of all that you need know about *him*. Tell me something of yourself; and first, have you served?"

"Never."

"Was your father a soldier, or your grandfather?"

"Neither."

"Have you any connexions on the mother's side in the army?"

"I am not aware of one."

He gave a short, hasty cough, and walked the room twice with his hands clasped at his back, and then, coming straight in front of me, said, "And your name? What's your name?"

"Potts! Potts!" said I, with a firm energy.

"Potztausend!" cried he, with a grim laugh; "what a strange name!"

"I said Potts, Herr Rittmeister, and not Potztausend," rejoined I, haughtily.

"And I heard you," said he; "it was involuntary on my part to add the termination. And who are the Pottsers? Are they noble?"

"Nothing of the kind—respectable middle-class folk; some in trade, some clerks in mercantile houses, some holding small government employments, one, perhaps the chief of the family, an eminent apothecary!"

As if I had uttered the most irresistible joke, at this word, he held his hands over his face and shook with laughter.

"Heilige Joseph!" cried he, at last, "this is too good! The Prince Max going out with an apothecary's nephew, or, maybe, his son!"

"His son upon this occasion," said I, gravely.

He did not reply for some minutes; and then, leaning over the back of a chair, and regarding me very fixedly, he said:

"You have only to say who you are, and what your belongings, and nothing will come of this affair. In fact, what with your little knowledge of German, your imperfect comprehension of what the prince said, and your own station in life, I'll engage to arrange everything and get you off clear!"

"In a word," said I, "I am to plead in formâ inferioris—isn't that it?"

"Just so," said he, puffing out a long cloud from his pipe.

"I'd rather die first!" cried I, with an energy that actually startled him.

"Well," said he, after a pause, "I think it's very probable that will come of it; but, if it be your choice, I have nothing to say."

"Go back, Herr Rittmeister," cried I, "and arrange the meeting for the very earliest moment."

I said this with a strong purpose, for I felt if the event were to come off at once, I could behave well.

"As you are resolved on this course," said he, "do not make any such confidences to others as you have made to me; nothing about those Pottsers in haberdashery and dry goods, but just simply you are the high and well-born Potts of Pottsheim. Not a word more."

I bowed an assent, but so anxious was he to

impress this upon me, that he went over it all once more.

"As it will be for me to receive the prince's message, the choice of weapons will be yours. What are you most expert with? I mean, after the pistol?" said he, grinning.

"I am about equally skilled in all. Rapier, pistol, or sabre are all alike to me."

"Der Teufel!" cried he; "I was not counting upon this; and as the sabre is the prince's weakest arm, we'll select it."

I bowed again, and more blandly.

"There is but one thing more," said he, turning about just as he was leaving the room. "Don't forget that in this case the gross provocation came from *you*, and therefore be satisfied with self-defence, or at most a mere flesh wound. Remember that the prince is a near connexion of the royal family of England, and it would be irreparable ruin to you were he to fall by your hand." And with this he went out.

Now, had he gravely bound me over not to strangle the lions in the Tower, it could not have appeared more ridiculous to me than this injunction, and if there had been in my heart the smallest fund of humour, I could have laughed at it; but, Heaven knows, none of my impulses took a mirthful turn at that moment, and there never was invented the drollery that could wring a smile from me.

I was sitting in a sort of stupor—I know not how long—when the door opened, and the Rittmeister's head peered in.

"To-morrow morning at five!" cried he. "I will fetch you half an hour before." The door closed, and he was off.

It was now a few minutes past eight o'clock, and there were therefore something short of nine hours of life left to me. I have heard that Victor Hugo is an amiable and kindly disposed man, and I feel assured, if he ever could have known the tortures he would have inflicted, he would never have designed the terrible record entitled *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné*. I conclude it was designed as a sort of appeal against death punishments. I doubt much of its efficacy in altering legislation, while I feel assured that if ever it fall in the way of one whose hours are numbered, it must add indescribably to his misery.

When, how, or by whom my supper was served, I never knew. I can only remember that a very sleepy waiter roused me out of a half-drowsy reverie about midnight by asking if he were to remove the dishes, or let them remain till morning. I bade him leave them, and me also, and when the door was closed I sat down to my meal. It was cold and unappetising. I would have deemed it unwholesome, too, but I remembered that the poor stomach it was destined for would never be called on to digest it, and that for once I might transgress without the fear of dyspepsia. My case was precisely that of the purseless traveller, who, we are told, can sing before the robber, just as if want ever suggested melody, or that being poor was a

reason for song. So with me any excess was open to me just because it was impossible!

"Still," thought I, "great criminals—and surely I am not as bad as they—eat very heartily." And so I cut the tough fowl vigorously in two and placed half of it on my plate. I filled myself out a whole goblet of wine, and drank it off. I repeated this, and felt better. I fell to now with a will, and really made an excellent supper. There were some potted sardines that I secretly resolved to have for my breakfast, when the sudden thought flashed across me that I was never to breakfast any more. I verily believe that I tasted in that one instant a whole lifelong of agony and bitterness.

There was in my friendless, lone condition, my youth, the mild and gentle traits of my nature, and my guileless simplicity, just that combination of circumstances which would make my fate peculiarly pathetic, and I imagined my countrymen standing beside the gravestone and muttering "Poor Potts!" till I felt my heart almost bursting with sorrow over myself.

"Cut off at three-and-twenty!" sobbed I; "in the very opening bud of his promise!"

"Misfortune is a pebble with many facets," says the Chinese adage, "and wise is he who turns it around till he find the smooth one."

"Is there such here?" thought I. "And where can it be?" With all my ingenuity I could not discover it, when at last there crossed my mind how the event would figure in the daily papers, and be handed down to remote posterity. I imagined the combat itself described in the language almost of a lion-hunt. "Potts, who had never till that moment had a sword in his hand—Potts, though at this time severely wounded, and bleeding profusely, nothing dismayed by the ferocious attack of his opponent—Potts maintained his guard with all the coolness of a consummate swordsman." How I wished my life might be spared just to let me write the narrative of the combat. I would like, besides, to show the world how generously I could treat an adversary, with what delicacy I could respect his motives, and how nobly deal even with his injustice.

"Was that two o'clock?" said I, starting up, while the humming sound of the gone bell filled the room. "Is it possible that but three hours now stand between me and——" I gave a shudder that made me feel as if I was standing in a fearful thorough draught, and actually looked up to see if the window were not open; but no, it was closed, the night calm, and the sky full of stars. "Oh!" exclaimed I, "if there are Pottses up amongst you yonder, I hope destiny may deal more kindly by them than down here. I trust that in those glorious regions a higher and purer intelligence prevails, and, above all things, that duelling is proclaimed the greatest of crimes." Remnant of barbarism! it is worse ten thousand times; it is the whole suit, costume, and investiture of an uncivilised age. "Poor Potts!" said I; "you went out upon your life-voyage with very generous intentions towards posterity. I wonder how it

will treat *you*? Will it vindicate your memory, uphold your fame, and dignify your motives? Will it be said in history, 'Amongst the memorable events of the period was the duel between the Prince Max of Swabia and an Irish gentleman named Potts?' To understand fully the circumstance of this remarkable conflict, it is necessary to premise that Potts was not what is vulgarly called constitutionally brave; but he was more. He was——" Ah! there was the puzzle. How was that miserable biographer ever to arrive at the secret of an organisation fine and subtle as mine? If I could but leave it on record—if I could but transmit to the ages that will come after me the invaluable key to the mystery of my being—a few days would suffice—a week certainly would do it—and why should I not have time given me for this? I will certainly propose this to the Rittmeister when he comes. There can be little doubt but he will see the matter with my own eyes."

As if I had summoned him by enchantment, there he stood at the door, wrapped in his great white cavalry cloak, and looking gigantic and ominous together.

"There is no carriage-road," said he, "to the place we are going, and I have come thus early that we may stroll along leisurely, and enjoy the fresh air of the morning."

Until that moment, I had never believed how heartless human nature could be! To talk of enjoyment, to recal the world and its pleasures, in any way, to one situated like I, was a cold and scarcely credible cruelty; but the words did me good service—they armed me with a sardonic contempt for life and mankind—and so I protested that I was charmed with the project, and out we set.

My companion was not talkative; he was a quiet, almost depressed man, who had led a very monotonous existence, with little society among his comrades; so that he did not offer me the occasion I sought for of saying saucy and sneering things of the world at large. Indeed, the first observation he made was that we were in a locality that ought to be interesting to Irishmen, since an ancient shrine of St. Patrick marked the spot of the convent to which we were approaching. No remark could have been more ill timed; to look back into the past, one ought to have some vista of the future. Who can sympathise with by-gones when he is counting the minutes that are to make him one of them?

What a bore that old Rittmeister was with his antiquities, and how I hated him as he said, "If your time was not so limited, I'd have taken you over to St. Gallen to inspect the manuscripts." I felt choking as he uttered these words. How was my time so limited? I did not dare to ask. Was he barbarous enough to mean that if I had another day to live, I might have passed it pleasantly in turning over musty missals in a monastery?

At last we came to a halt in a little grove of pines, and he said, "Have you any address to give me of friends or relatives, or have you any peculiar directions on any subject."

"You made a remark last night, Herr Rittmeister," said I, "which did not at the moment produce the profound impression upon me that subsequent reflection has enforced. You said that if his royal highness were fully aware that his antagonist was the son of a practising chemist and apothecary——"

"That I could have put off this event; true enough, but when you refused that alternative, and insisted on satisfaction, I myself, as your countryman, gave the guarantee for your rank, which nothing will now make me retract. Understand me well—nothing will make me retract."

"You are pleased to be precipitate," said I, with an attempt to sneer; "my remark had but one object, and that was my personal disinclination to obtain a meeting under a false pretext."

"Make your mind easy on that score. It will be all precisely the same in about an hour hence."

I nearly fainted as I heard this, it seemed as though a cold stream of water ran through my spine and paralysed the very marrow inside:

"You have your choice of weapons," said he, curtly; "which are you best at?"

I was going to say the "javelin," but I was ashamed, and yet should a man sacrifice life for a false modesty; while I reasoned thus, he pointed to a group of officers close to the garden wall of the convent, and said,

"They are all waiting yonder, let us hasten on."

If I had been mortally wounded, and was dragging my feeble limbs along to rest them for ever on some particular spot, I might have, probably, effected my progress as easily as I now did. The slightest inequality of ground tripped me, and I stumbled at every step.

"You are cold," said my companion, "and probably unused to early rising, taste this."

He gave me his brandy-flask, and I finished it off at a draught. Blessings be on the man who invented alcohol! all the ethics that ever were written cannot work the same miracle in a man's nature as a glass of whisky. Talk of all the wonders of chemistry, and what are they to the simple fact that two-pennyworth of cognac can convert a coward into a hero?

I was not quite sure that my antagonist had not resorted to a similar sort of aid, for he seemed as light-hearted and as jolly as though he was out for a pic-nic. There was a jauntiness, too, in the way he took out his cigar and scraped his lucifer match on a beech-tree, that quite struck me, and I should like to have imitated it if I could.

"If it's the same to you, take the sabre, it's his weakest weapon," whispered the Rittmeister in my ear, and I agreed. And now there was a sort of commotion about the choice of the ground and the places, in which my friend seemed to stand by me most manfully. Then there followed a general measurement of swords, and a fierce comparison of weapons. I don't know how many were not thrust into my hand, one saying, "Take this, it is well balanced in the

wrist, or if you like a heavy guard, here's your arm!"

"To me, it is a matter of perfect indifference," said I, jauntily. "All weapons are alike."

"He will attack fiercely, and the moment the word is given," whispered the Rittmeister, "so be on your guard; keep your hilt full before you, or he'll slice off your nose before you are aware of it."

"Be not so sure of that till you have seen my sword play," said I, fiercely; and my heart swelled with a fierce sentiment that must have been courage, for I never remember to have felt the like before. I know I was brave at that moment, for if, by one word, I could have averted the combat, I would not have uttered it.

"To your places," cried the umpire, "and on your guard! Are you ready?"

"Ready," re-echoed I, wildly, while I gave a mad flourish of my weapon round my head that threw the whole company into a roar of laughter; and, at the same instant, two figures, screaming fearfully, rushed from the beech copse, and, bursting their way through the crowd, fell upon me with the most frantic embraces, amidst the louder laughter of the others. O shame and ineffable disgrace! O misery never to be forgotten! It was Vaterchen who now grasped my knees, and Tintefleck who clung round my neck and kissed me repeatedly. From the time of the Laocoon, no one ever struggled to free himself as I did, but all in vain—my efforts, impeded by the sword, lest I might unwillingly wound them, were all fruitless, and we rolled upon the ground inextricably commingled and struggling.

"Was I right?" cried the prince. "Was I right in calling this fellow a saltimbanque? See him now with his comrades around him, and say if I was mistaken."

"How is this?" whispered the Rittmeister. "Have you dared to deceive me?"

"I have deceived no one," said I, trying to rise, and I poured forth a torrent of not very coherent eloquence, as the mirth of my audience seemed to imply; but, fortunately, Vaterchen had now obtained a hearing, and was detailing in very fluent language the nature of the relations between us. Poor old fellow, in his boundless gratitude I seemed more than human; and his praises actually shamed me to hear them. How I had first met them, he recounted in the strain of one assisted by the gods in classic times; his description made me a sort of Jove coming down on a rosy cloud to succour suffering humanity; and then came in Tintefleck with her broken words, marvellously aided by "action," as she poured forth the heap of gold upon the grass and said it was all mine!

Wonderful metal, to be sure, for enforcing conviction on the mind of man: there is a sincerity about it far more impressive than any vocal persuasion. The very clink of it implies that the real and the positive are in question, not the imaginary and the delusive. "This is all his!" cried she, pointing to the treasure with the air of one showing Aladdin's cave; and though her

speech was not very intelligible, Vaterchen's "vulgate" ran underneath and explained the text.

"I hope you will forgive me. I trust you will be satisfied with my apologies, made thus openly," said the prince, in the most courteous of manners. "One who can behave with such magnanimity can scarcely be wanting in another species of generosity." And ere I could well reply, I found myself shaking hands with every one, and every one with me; nor was the least pleasurable part of this recognition the satisfaction displayed by the Rittmeister at the good issue of this event. I had great difficulty in resisting their resolution to carry me back with them to Bregenz. Innumerable were the plans and projects devised for my entertainment. Field sports, sham fights, rifle-shooting, all were displayed attractively before me; and it was clear, that if I accepted their invitations, I should be treated like the most favoured guest. But I was firm in my refusal; and, pleading a pretended necessity to be at a particular place by a particular day, I started once more, taking the road with the "vagabonds," who now seemed bound to me by an indissoluble bond; at least so Vaterchen assured me by the most emphatic of declarations, and that, do with him what I might, he was my slave till death.

"Who is ever completely happy?" says the sage; and with too good reason is the doubt expressed. Here, one might suppose, was a situation abounding with the most pleasurable incidents. To have escaped a duel, and come out with honour and credit from the issue; to have refund not only my missing money, but to have my suspicions relieved as to those whose honest name was dear to me, and whose discredit would have darkened many a bright hope of life,—these were no small successes; and yet—I shame to own it—my delight in them was dashed by an incident so small and insignificant, that I have scarce courage to recall it. Here it is, however. While I was taking a kindly farewell of my military friends, hand-shaking and protesting interminable friendships, I saw, or thought I saw, the prince, with even a more affectionate warmth, making his adieus to Tintefleck! If he had not his arm actually round her waist, there was certainly a white leather cavalry glove curiously attached to her side, and one of her cheeks was deeper coloured than the other, and her bearing and manner seemed confused, so that she answered, when spoken to, at cross purposes.

"How did you come by this brooch, Tintefleck? I never saw it before."

"Oh, is it not pretty? It is a violet; and these leaves, though green, are all gold."

"Answer me, girl! who gave it thee?" said I, in the voice of Othello.

"Must I tell?" murmured she, sorrowfully.

"On the spot—confess it!"

"It was one who bade me keep it till he should bring me a prettier one."

"I do not care for what he said, or what you promised. I want his name."

"And that I was never to forget him till then—never."

"Do you say this to irritate and offend me, or do you prevaricate out of shame?" said I, angrily.

"Shame!" repeated she, haughtily.

"Ay, shame or fear."

"Or fear! Fear of what, or of whom?"

"You are very daring to ask me. And now, for the last time, Tintefleck—for the last time, I say, who gave you this?"

As I said these words we had just reached the borders of a little rivulet, over which we were to cross by stepping-stones. Vaterchen was, as usual, some distance behind, and now calling to us to wait for him. She turned at his cry, and answered him, but made no reply to me.

This continued defiance of me overcame my temper altogether, sorely pushed as it was by a stupid jealousy, and seizing her wrist with a strong grasp, I said, in a slow, measured tone, "I insist upon your answer to my question, or—"

"Or what?"

"That we part here, and for ever."

"With all my heart. Only remember one thing," said she, in a low, whispering voice: "you left me once before—you quitted me, in a moment of temper, just as you threaten it now. Go, if you will, or if you must; but let this be our last meeting and last parting."

"It is as such I mean it—good-by!" I sprang on the stepping-stone as I spoke, and at the same instant a glittering object splashed into the stream close to me. I saw it, just as one might see the lustre of a trout's back as it rose to a fly. I don't know what demon sat where my heart ought to have been, but I pressed my hat over my eyes, and went on without turning my head.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

VERY conflicting and very mixed were my feelings, as I set forth alone. I had come well, very well, out of a trying emergency. I was neither driven to pretend I was something other than myself, with grand surroundings and illustrious belongings, nor had I masqueraded under a feigned name and a false history; but as Potts, son of Potts the apothecary, I had carried my head high and borne myself creditably.

"Magna est veritas," indeed! I am not so sure of the "prævalebit semper," but assuredly where it does succeed, the success is wonderful.

Heaven knows into what tortuous entanglements might my passion for the "imaginative"—I liked this name for it—have led me, had I given way to one of my usual temptations. In more than one of my flights have I found myself carried up into a region, and have had to sustain an atmosphere very unsuited to my respiration, and now, with the mere prudence of walking on the terra firma, and treading the common highway of life, I found I had reached my goal safely and speedily. Flowers do not assume to be shrubs,

nor shrubs affect to be forest trees; the limestone and granite never pretend that they are porphyry and onyx. Nature is real, and why should man alone be untruthful and unreal? If I liked these reflections, and tried to lose myself in them, it was in the hope of shutting out others less gratifying; but, do what I would, there before me arose the image of Catinka, as she stood at the edge of the rivulet, that stream which seemed to cut me off from one portion of my life, and make the past the irrevocably gone for ever.

I am certain I was quite right in parting with that girl. Any respectable man, a father of a family, would have applauded me for severing this dangerous connexion. What could come of such association except unhappiness? "Potts," would the biographer say—"Potts saw, with the unerring instinct of his quick perception, that this young creature would one day or other have laid at his feet the burnt-offering of her heart, and then, what could he have done? If Potts had been less endowed with genius, or less armed in honesty, he had not anticipated this peril, or, foreseeing, had undervalued it. But he both saw and feared it. How very differently had a libertine reasoned out this situation!" And then I thought how wicked I might have been; a monster of crime and atrocity. Every one knows the sensation of lying snugly a-bed on a stormy night, and, as the rain plashes and the wind howls, drawing more closely around him the coverlet, and the selfish satisfaction of his own comfort, heightened by all the possible hardships of others outside. In the same benevolent spirit, but not by any means so reprehensible, is it pleasant to imagine oneself a great criminal, standing in the dock, to be stared at by a horror-struck public, photographed, shaved, prison costumed, exhorted, sentenced, and then, just as the last hammer has driven the last nail into the scaffold, and the great bell has tolled out, to find that you are sitting by your wood fire, with your curtains drawn, your uncut volume beside you, and your peculiar weakness, be it tea, or sherry-cobbler, at your elbow. I constantly take a "rise" out of myself in this fashion, and rarely a week goes over that I have not either poisoned a sister or had a shot at the Queen. It is a sort of intellectual Russian bath, in which the luxury consists in the exaggerated alternative between being scalded first and rolled in the snow afterwards. It was in this figurative snow I was now disporting myself, pleasantly and refreshingly, and yet remorse, like a sturdy dun, stood at my gate, and refused to go away.

Had I, indeed, treated her harshly? had I rejected the offer of her young and innocent heart? Very puzzling and embarrassing question this, and especially to a man who had nothing of the coxcomb in his nature, none of that prompting of self-love that would suggest a vain reply. I felt that it was very natural *she* should have been struck by the attractive features of my character, but I felt this without a particle of conceit. I even experienced a sense of sorrow

as I thought over it, just as a conscientious syren might have regretted that Nature had endowed her with such a charming voice; and this duty—for it was a duty—discharged, I bethought me of my own future. I had a mission, which was to see Kate Herbert and give her Miss Crofton's letter. In doing so, I must needs throw off all disguises and mockeries, and be Potts, the very creature she sneered at, the man whose mere name was enough to suggest a vulgar life and a snob's nature! No matter what misery it may give, I will do it manfully. *She* may never appreciate—the world at large may never appreciate—what noble motives were hidden beneath these assumed natures, mere costumes as they were to impart more vigour and persuasiveness to sentiments which, uttered in the undress of Potts, would have carried no convictions with them. Play Macbeth in a paletot, perform Othello in "pegtops," and see what effect you will produce! Well, my pretended station and rank were the mere gauges and properties that gave force to my opinions. And now to relinquish these, and be the actor, in the garish light of the noonday, and a shabby-genteel coat and hat! "I will do it," muttered I, "I will do it, but the suffering will be intense!" When the prisoner sentenced to a long captivity is no more addressed by his name, but simply called No. 18, or 43, it is said that the shock seems to kill the sense of identity within him, and that nothing more tends to that stolid air of indifference, that hopeless inactivity of feature, so characteristic of a prison life; in the very same way am I affected when limited to my Potts nature, and condemned to confine myself within the narrow bounds of that one small identity. From what Prince Max had said at the table d'hôte at Bregenz, it was clear that Mrs. Keats had already learned I was not the young prince of the House of Orleans; but, in being disabused of one error, she seemed to have fallen into another, and it behoved me to explain that I was not a rope-dancer or a mountebank. "She too shall know me in my Potts nature," said I; "she also shall recognise me in the 'majesty of myself.'" I was not very sure of what that was, but I found it in Hegel.

And when I have completed this task, I will throw myself like a waif upon the waters of life. I will be that which the moment or the event shall make me—neither trammelled by the past nor awed by the future. I will take the world as the drama of a day. Were men to do this, what breadth and generosity would it impart to them! It is in self-seeking and advancement that we narrow our faculties and imprison our natures. A man fancies he owns a palace and a demesne, but it is the palace that owns *him*, obliges him to maintain a certain state, live in a certain style, surrounded with certain observances, not one of which may be perhaps native to him. It is the poor man, who comes to visit and gaze on his splendours, who really enjoys them; *he* sees them without one detracting influence—not to say that in *his* heart are no corroding jealousies of some other rich man, who has a finer Claude,

or a grander Rubens. Instead, besides, of owning one palace and one garden, it is the universe he owns; the vast Savannah is his race-ground; Niagara his own private cascade.

My heart bounded with these buoyant fancies, and I stepped out briskly on my road. Now that I had made this vow of poverty to myself, I felt very light-hearted and gay. So long as a man is struggling for place and pre-eminence in life, how can he be generous, how even gracious? Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox, says the commandment, but surely it must have been your neighbour's before it was yours, and if you have striven for it, it is likely that you have coveted it. Now, I will covet nothing—positively nothing—and I will see if in this noble spirit there will not be a reward proportionately ample and splendid.

My road led through that wild and somewhat dreary valley by which the Upper Rhine descends, fed by many an Alpine stream and torrent, to reach the fertile plains of Germany. It was a desolate expanse of shingle, with here and there little patches of oak scrub, or, at rare intervals, small enclosures of tillage, though how tilled, or for whom, it was hard to say, since not a trace of inhabitant could be seen, far or wide. Deep fissures, the course of many a mountain-stream, cut the road at places, and through these the foot traveller had to pass on stepping-stones; while wheel carriages, descending into the chaos of rocks and stones, fared even worse, and incurred serious peril to spring and axle in the passage. On the mountain-sides, indeed, some chalets were to be seen, very high up and scarcely accessible, but ever surrounded with little tracts of greener verdure and more varied foliage. From these heights, too, I could hear the melodious ring of the bells worn by the cattle—sure signs of peasant comfort. "Might not a man find a life of simple cares, and few sorrows, up yonder?" asked I, as I gazed upward. While I continued to look, the great floating clouds that soared on the mountain-tops began to mass and to mingle together, thickening and darkening at every moment, and then, as though overweighted, slowly to descend, shutting out chalet and shady copse and crag, as they fell, on their way to the plain beneath. It was a grievous change from the bright picture a few moments back, and not the less disheartening that the heavily charged mist now melted into rain, that soon fell in torrents. With not a rock nor a shrub to shelter under, I had nothing for it but to trudge onward to the nearest village, wherever that might be. How speedily the slightest touch of the real will chase away the fictitious and imaginary! No more dreams nor fancies now, as wet and soaked I plodded on, my knapsack seeming double its true weight, and my stick appearing to take root each time it struck the ground. The fog, too, was so dense that I was forced to feel my way as I went. The dull roar of the Rhine

was the only sound for a long time; but this at length became broken by the crashing noise of timber carried down by the torrents, and the louder din of the torrents themselves as they came tumbling down the mountain. I would have retraced my steps to Bregenz, but that I knew the places I had passed dryshod in the morning would by this time have become impassable rivers. My situation was a dreary one, and not without peril, since there was no saying when or where a mountain cataract might not burst its way down the cliffs and sweep clean across the road towards the Rhine.

Had there been one spot to offer shelter, even the poorest and meanest, I would gladly have taken it, and made up my mind to await better weather; but there was not a bank, nor even a bush, to cover under, and I was forced to trudge on. It seemed to me at last that I must have been walking many hours; but having no watch, and being surrounded with impenetrable fog, I could make no guess of the time, when at length a louder and deeper sound appeared to fill the air, and make the very mist vibrate with its din. The surging sound of a great volume of water, sweeping along through rocks and fallen trees, apprised me that I was nearing a torrent; while the road itself, covered with some inches of water, showed that the stream had already risen above its embankments. There was real danger in this; light carriages—the great lumbering diligence itself—had been known to be carried away by these suddenly swollen streams, and I began seriously to fear disaster. Wading cautiously onward, I reached what I judged to be the edge of the torrent, and felt with my stick that the water was here borne madly onward, and at considerable depth. Though through the fog I could make out the opposite bank, and see that the stream was not a wide one, I plainly perceived that the current was far too powerful for me to breast without assistance, and that no single passenger could attempt it with safety. I may have stood half an hour thus, with the muddy stream surging over my ankles, for I was stunned and stupified by the danger, when I thought I saw through the mist two gigantic figures looming through the fog, on the opposite bank. When and how they had come there, I knew not, if they were indeed there, and if these figures were not mere spectres of my imagination. It was not till having closed my eyes, and opening them again beheld the same objects, that I could fully assure myself of their reality.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND was commenced in May, 1859, and though but eighteen monthly parts have yet been issued, we believe it has now the largest circulation of any similar publication in the world. Yet notwithstanding the wide circulation of the work itself, its columns are more quoted from than from any other publication, and it is probably not an exaggeration to estimate that Mr. Dickens' new story, "Great Expectations," will find in this country alone more than three millions of readers.

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